

Shahal: PLO offers new security ideas

TEL AVIV (R) — An Israeli minister said on Tuesday a leading Palestinian negotiator had proposed new ideas which could break a deadlock in Israel-Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) talks over Israel's withdrawal from the West Bank. Police Minister Moshe Shahal said Nabil Shatah, the top Palestinian negotiator, proposed expanded joint patrols and police stations shared by Israel and Palestinian security forces. "In a conversation with Nabil Shatah last Friday, he was very encouraged by a proposal which he presented," Mr. Shahal told reporters. "I must say it even surprised me to a certain extent to consider not only joint patrols by our forces and Palestinian police but also police stations which would be jointly operated both by our forces and Palestinian forces," he added. He did not give further details. Dr. Shatah was not immediately available for comment.

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AMMAN WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 28, 1994, RAJAB 25, 1415

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OIC condemns Israeli bill on Jerusalem

DUBAI (R) — The Organisation of the Islamic Conference (OIC) said on Tuesday a law passed by Israel limiting the actions of the Palestinian Authority in Jerusalem contravened the Jewish state's peace accord with the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO). The 51-member OIC also said it was sending a letter to Presidents of the Islamic community committed to a just solution to Jerusalem to Palestinian control on the basis for any peace in the region. "This decision impedes the progress of the peace process and contradicts the agreement on implementing the declaration of principles on interim self-rule in the occupied Palestinian territories," said the OIC. The OIC "would like to confirm the stand of the Islamic Ummah... that a just and comprehensive solution to the conflict in the region must guarantee the return of Al Quds to Palestinian sovereignty as the capital of the State of Palestine," the statement said.

Jordan Times

An independent Arab political daily published by the Jordan Times Foundation

جريدة عن المؤسسة الصحفية الاردنية - الرأي

Regent visits PSD

AMMAN (Petra) — His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent, Tuesday visited the Public Security Department (PSD) where he met with PSD Director Lieutenant General Abdul Rahim Al Adwan. Prince Hassan expressed satisfaction over the performance of the PSD after being briefed on the services it offers to citizens. The meeting was attended by Sharif Fawwaz Al Zabel Abdullah, commander of the badia and border police forces.

Jordan, Israel discuss transport

TIBERIAS (Petra) — Jordanian and Israeli officials and experts held a meeting here on Tuesday to discuss transport-related issues in accordance with provisions of the Jordanian-Israeli peace treaty. The Jordanian side was headed by Hani Al Mulki, head of a follow-up committee in charge of the implementation of the peace treaty, while the Israeli side was chaired by Eliakim Rubenstein. Dr. Mulki said the two sides will reach an agreement on transport by the end of January. The follow-up committee will hold another meeting during the first week of January. The joint borders committee also held a meeting here and discussed border-delimitation issues in addition to fixing border signs. The various committees on water, energy, health, communications and economic affairs will hold meetings in Tiberias and Deir Al Aula on Wednesday to discuss means of implementing provisions of the treaty in these areas.

Jordan denies report on pilgrims

AMMAN (Petra) — Minister of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs Abdul Salam Al Abbadi on Tuesday dismissed as baseless and totally inaccurate the reports carried by foreign media that Jordanian authorities had refused to coordinate with the Palestinian Authority on passage through Jordanian territories of pilgrims from the West Bank and Gaza. Dr. Abbadi said his ministry stands ready to provide all facilities and services to West Bank and Gaza pilgrims. The minister said Jordan had not changed any of the procedures or arrangements followed in previous years.

Israel expels Nablus students to Gaza

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (AFP) — The Israeli army on Tuesday expelled 23 Palestinians studying in the occupied West Bank town of Nablus to the self-rule Gaza Strip, military sources said. The students, all from the Gaza Strip, did not have residence permits for the West Bank which are issued by Israeli military authorities, they said.

1 dead in Riyadh protest — IRNA

TEHRAN (AFP) — Saudi Arabia's security forces last week crushed a protest against King Fahd at Riyadh University, killing at least one student and wounding several others, the official Iranian news agency IRNA, quoted independent sources in Riyadh, said the students demonstrated on Dec. 20 chanting slogans against King Fahd and Crown Prince Abdullah before being "attacked by Royal Guard Forces." At least one student was killed and a number of students were injured during the demonstration, IRNA said in a despatch dated in Amman.

Mubarak ratifies death sentences

CAIRO (AFP) — Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak on Tuesday ratified the death sentences against Islamic militants convicted of murdering two German tourists and two Egyptians at a Red Sea resort in September.

5 hurt, 45 arrested in protest over settlement

El Khader villagers demonstrate against Israeli confiscation of their ancestral land

OCCUPIED WEST BANK (Agencies)

— Five people were injured and 45 arrested Tuesday as Israeli forces dispersed Palestinian and Israeli protesters trying to prevent settlers from building at a new West Bank site.

Scuffles broke out when police and troops moved in to end a standoff between hundreds of settlers who want to build new homes north of their Ephrata settlement and 200 Palestinians backed by left-wing Israeli protesters.

Palestinian Local Government Minister Saeb Erakat who led the protest said the expansion of Jewish settlements at Ephrata and throughout the West Bank marked the "graveyard of the peace process."

Villagers from El Khader were joined by Israelis from the "Peace Now" movement and left-wing Hadash deputies as they tried to block ground-clearing work by settlers using bulldozers on 40 hectares of land.

A human chain held up construction work during the day but Israeli soldiers later cleared the land — a hill next to Ephrata overlooking El Khader — to allow work to

begin.

"This is our land. You have no right to build here," Palestinian women shouted before the army drove them away.

"If the settlements continue, negotiations should stop. This is the only card

rescue.

One of the builders told Israeli radio that extra bulldozers were on their way to speed up construction work.

Dr. Erakat was one of five Palestinians hurt during the protest, and said he was hit by an Israeli soldier.

But he added: "That is not important. What is important is the suffering of these people. There is nothing they can do against Israel stealing their land."

Some 45 Palestinians and Israelis were also arrested when security forces dragged them away from the land.

An eyewitness said Knesset member Tamar Gozansky was removed by police after she stood in front of the bulldozers.

Dr. Erakat said Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) leader Yasser Arafat was angry and Palestinians went to court on Tuesday to block the development.

"This is our land. You have no right to build here," Palestinian women shouted before the army drove them away.

The Palestinian self-rule authority has said it will take the issue of settlements to the United Nations as anger grows at plans to build thousands more settlers'

homes in the West Bank in the next few years.

Israeli Environment Minister Yossi Sarid from the left-wing Meretz joined the storm Tuesday, telling Israel Radio he was against the creation of a new district at Ephrata "as we can't negotiate with the Palestinians while confiscating their lands."

Communications Minister Shulamit Aloni, also from Meretz, accused the settlers of "stealing land by armed force."

But the settlers at Ephrata claim they have legal deeds proving ownership well before the creation of the Jewish state in 1948, and say the development is an entirely new settlement and not just an extension of Ephrata.

The Palestinians say they hold the land to the land proving ownership well before the creation of the Jewish state in 1948, and say the development is an entirely new settlement and not just an extension of Ephrata.

They say the project is part of Israel's aim to build Jewish homes throughout "greater Jerusalem," extending southwards to Bethlehem and northwards towards Ramallah and Jericho.

The Palestinian self-rule authority has said it will take the issue of settlements to the United Nations as anger grows at plans to build thousands more settlers'

(Continued on page 3)

Israel hopes for Gulf ties after Rabin trip to Oman

TEL AVIV (Agencies)

— Israel is hoping for a diplomatic breakthrough in the Gulf in the wake of Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin's trail-blazing visit to Oman, the first by a head of government from the Jewish state.

Mr. Rabin, who returned to Israel at dawn Tuesday, declared: "There are openings in various parts of the Arab World."

He praised the "courage and imagination" of Oman's Sultan Qaboos for becoming the first Gulf Arab leader to host an Israeli prime minister.

The trip would be an encouragement of the continuation of the peace process, he said.

Israel has no official ties with any of the six Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) states — Oman, Qatar, Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and the United Arab Emirates.

But Israeli television said it could take the first step to

wards full diplomatic ties with Oman by opening interest sections in Tel Aviv and Muscat in early 1995.

Mr. Rabin, who left Tel Aviv for Oman secretly on board an air force plane Monday, discussed the Middle East peace process and bilateral ties with Sultan Qaboos, state radio reported.

"I look at it (the Sultan's invitation) as an encouragement to the peace process, to the negotiations that have to be concluded to achieve a comprehensive peace," Mr. Rabin said on his return.

"I believe that the courage of His Majesty the Sultan and his imagination in inviting the prime minister of Israel to visit, the first visit by an Israeli prime minister in any one of the countries of the Arabian Peninsula," Mr. Rabin said, adding: "I believe that we should be thankful to him."

Mr. Rabin said the purpose of Sultan Qaboos was to "strengthen, to give backing

for the continuation of the peace process... to express satisfaction about agreements that have been signed... and to encourage the continuation of the peace negotiations with Syria and Lebanon and of course to conclude the negotiations with the Palestinians."

"He did it in encouragement of the continuation of the peace process, with the purpose to achieve a comprehensive peace with all the partners to the peace negotiations, that is with the Palestinians, Jordan, Syria and Lebanon."

Israeli television reported that Israel and Oman have had discreet contacts for 18 years.

The official Omani News Agency (ONA) reported that "The Omani sovereign and the Israeli prime minister met to give a boost to the Middle East peace process and to support efforts to se-

(Continued on page 3)

Carbon monoxide kills 3 children in Zarqa

By Rana Husseini Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Three children were killed and their parents were listed in critical condition after inhaling carbon monoxide in Ojan area in Zarqa, the Civil Defence Department said Tuesday.

Captain Farid Share, director of the public relations department at the CDD, said the five-member family went to sleep Monday night and left the kerosene heater lit in a small room.

"There wasn't enough air circulation in the room and the family was inhaling carbon monoxide," he told the Jordan Times.

The official said that the family was discovered Tuesday noon by neighbours and relatives when they went to check for the family because "it was unusual not to see any of them around the neighbourhood."

All five were rushed to Jabal Al Zayton Hospital in Zarqa. All three children were declared dead on arrival. The parents, Salameh Rawashdeh and his wife Widad Mohammad, both 30, were listed in critical condition, but were expected to survive, the CDD said.

The dead were identified as Mohammad Rawashdeh, 30 months, Majd, two years, and Mohanad, 1 year.

Capt. Share said despite repeated warnings via radio and television about the dangers of gas and kerosene stoves, "we still see the same accidents on a daily basis."

"Every day there are reports of suffocation. Sometimes it causes death to innocent people, and it seems that people do not abide by the safety messages we send through the media," he said.

Also on Tuesday, a huge

(Continued on page 3)



His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan takes the oath as Regent in the presence of His Salam Majali and senior officials on Tuesday shortly before the King left for Austria on a several-day visit (Petra photo)

King heads for Austria for check-ups on ear problem

AMMAN (J.T.) — His Majesty King Hussein left for Austria on Tuesday on a several day visit during which he will undergo check-ups for an infection in his middle ear.

The Austrian news agency APA reported King Hussein was due for an operation to correct an ear problem. APA, quoting sources in the office of the governor of Styrian province, Josef Krainer, said King Hussein would be treated at the ear clinic of Graz Hospital.

Rabin briefs King

Before his departure, the King was contacted by Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin, who briefed him on a groundbreaking trip the Israeli leader made to Oman.

"It (the phone call) lasted 15 minutes," Mr. Rabin's adviser Benny Cohen said in occupied Jerusalem. "He (Rabin) brought him (the King) up to date on his trip to Oman."

Mr. Rabin flew secretly to Oman on Monday and returned on Tuesday. It was the first visit by an

Israeli leader to a Gulf Arab state and Mr. Rabin said he hoped it would strengthen Middle East peace moves (see separate story).

King Hussein warned Jordaniens on Monday not to expect swift economic gains from the treaty with Israel, which ended 46 years of hostilities.

Many Jordanians say they are disappointed to see no immediate cash flow into the economy. Some Jordanian deputies accuse the government of wrongly promising instant prosperity and higher standards of living.

Earlier on Tuesday, Israel's Haaretz newspaper quoted Prime Minister Abdul Salam Al Majali as urging Israel to accelerate implementation of economic aspects of their peace accords.

Dr. Majali, who met an Israeli foreign ministry team in Amman on Sunday, was quoted by Haaretz as saying the Jordanian people had yet to see dividends from the peace treaty.

Eytan Bentsur, senior deputy director general of

Israel's foreign ministry, said in Amman that the team offered Israeli know-how in health, education and agriculture.

Mr. Bentsur said: "We are doing our utmost to develop relations because this peace is very dear to us."

King Hussein was seen off upon his departure for Austria by His Royal Highness Prince Mohammad, His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, Their Royal Highnesses Prince Abdulla Ben Al Hussein, Prince Faisal Ben Al Hussein and Prince Rashid Ben Al Hussein.

Also seeing off the King were Prime Minister Majali, the speaker of the Upper and Lower Houses of Parliament, Royal Court Chief Sharif Zeid Ben Shaker, senior Royal Court officials, and Cabinet ministers.

The Crown Prince was sworn to serve as Regent prior to the King's departure.

The King is accompanied by Their Royal Highnesses Prince Ali Ben Al Hussein and Prince Hamza Ben Al Hussein.

4 priests killed in Algeria as France probes hijack

Dynamite found aboard stormed plane; hijackers planned suicide mission in Paris

PARIS (Agencies) — The Algerian conflict deepened Tuesday with the murder of four foreign missionaries, as French authorities revealed that Algerian hijackers had wired up a French Airbus with dynamite before the plane was stormed.

France also said the hijackers had planned a suicide mission over Paris.

The objective of the terrorist was a suicide operation over Paris," Interior Minister Charles Pasqua told reporters.

Mr. Pasqua gave no details but the hijackers, who commanded the Air France Airbus 300 in Algiers on Saturday and insisted all along on flying to Paris, could have planned to crash the plane on the French capital.

Algerian singer Cesar Ferhat, a passenger on the plane, said police told him released hostages had overheard the hijackers whispering about the plan among themselves.

In what may have been a revenge attack for the killing of the four hijackers by elite French commandos, four Catholic priests, three of them French and one Belgian, were murdered in northern Algeria on Tuesday.

Algeria blamed fundamentalist guerrillas for the murders.

Officials would not comment on the allegation. Police were still questioning some passengers at a Marseille hotel.

"The investigation is continuing," Mr. Pasqua said.

The four priests killed in Algeria on Tuesday were members of the "Pères Blancs" (White Fathers) order.

The official Algerian news agency APS said the four were killed by Islamic Fundamentalist guerrillas.

Algerian security forces immediately launched a search for the "terrorist group," a term used by authorities for Islamic rebels, APS said.

In Rome, the priests' order said they were trying to find out exactly what happened.

The killings took to 76 the number of foreigners killed in Algeria since the Islamic Armed Group (GIA), which has claimed responsibility for the hijacking, ordered all foreigners more than a year ago to leave or face death.

Home & Middle East News

JORDAN TIMES, WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 21, 1994

Amman protesters demand U.N. intervention in Chechnya

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — About 200 Jordanian women and children mostly of Chechen origin on Tuesday staged a demonstration in front of the U.N. offices in Amman demanding an immediate end to the Russian military intervention in the breakaway Chechen republic.

Holding aloft banners denouncing the two-week-old Russian military assault on the republic and siege of the capital Grozny, the protesters called for immediate United Nations intervention to end the crisis in the Caucasian republic.

It was the latest demonstration by the 15,000-strong Jordanian Chechen community in support of Chechen President Dzhokhar Dudayev, who has challenged Russian domination of his republic.

"Russia get out of Chechnya," said a banner held by a small girl who had a white bandana dotted with red to symbolise the Chechen fighters injured in the fighting with Russian troopers.

Another poster had a caricature of Russian President Boris Yeltsin with a gun pointed at his head.

The protesters dispersed peacefully after handing over a memorandum addressed to U.N. Secretary-General Boutros Ghali and handed over to an official at the United Nations office.

The memo, signed by Said Beano, chairman of the Jordanian Committee for the Support of the People of the Independent Caucasian Chechen Republic, called on Dr. Ghali to use his "goodwill and effort to stop the Russian army, which is exercising its might against the peace loving and fiercely independent Chechen nation."

Recalling the history of the Chechens as the "original Caucasian race which inhabited Chechnya for several thousands years" and a people who has paid a heavy price for their freedom, the memorandum said that the "current struggle of Chechnya is not an internal affair of the Russian Federation."

"It is the exercise of the right every nation to live in freedom and peace, including all the nations of the Russian Caucasus which have suffered from Russian colonialism for almost 150 years," said the memo, a copy of which was made available to the Jordan Times.

"This nation lost 75 per cent of its population resisting the Russian invasion in a long fight for freedom during the period 1785-1864. In 1918, Chechnya and other neighbouring nations formed the independent federal republic of North Caucasus which was recognised by many European countries including



Children holding banners denouncing the Russian military intervention in Chechnya stage a protest in Amman on Tuesday (photo by Yousef Allan)

right to "colonise and enslave whole nations forever," why the world supports the freedom of the Baltic countries while denying it others, and "will the United Nations ever be able to consistently live up to its humanitarian charter," said the two-page memo.

Noting that the Jordanian committee in support of Chechen independence includes Muslims as well as

Christians, the memo said: "We are surprised by the absence of any United Nations peace efforts in the North Caucasus region, particularly when civilians are indiscriminately bombed and exterminated."

"We look forward to seeing the United Nations, under your guidance, involvement in bringing freedom and peace to this troubled North Caucasus region," it concluded.

Lebanese suspect in bombing blames Israel

BEIRUT (AFP) — A Lebanese woman in Israel's pay was arrested in connection with a deadly bombing here last week which killed four people, including a key Hezbollah security chief, a high-ranking Lebanon official said on Tuesday.

The official, who declined to be named, told AFP that the investigation into the Dec. 21 bombing in Beirut's southern suburbs revealed that an "Israeli network" was behind the attack.

A Lebanese woman was arrested and testified that an Israeli officer headed the alleged network whose aim was to carry out a string of bomb attacks in Lebanon, the official said.

The woman's Lebanese husband, who is also a member of the gang, fled to Israel's self-declared "security zone" in South Lebanon after the bombing.

Two other people who were arrested following the attack have been released after questioning.

The blast killed four people including Fuad Moghrabi, a security chief in the Iranian-backed Hezbollah movement, and wounded 14 others.

The 50-kilogramme bomb was placed in the densely-populated Shatila neighbourhood of the southern suburbs, a stronghold of Hezbollah.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Tourism banned in Egyptian desert

CAIRO (AFP) — Tourism has been banned in Egypt's desert regions for five years in order to protect endangered species of animals, Tuesday's edition of Al Ahram daily reported. The Organisation for Environmental Protection has announced its decision which comes into effect Monday to Arab embassies in Cairo and Egyptian embassies in other Arab countries, the paper said. Official hunting is banned in the Sinai desert and Egypt's western desert region near the border with Libya. However, hunters — mainly wealthy Gulf Arabs — obtain permission to go on tourist trips into the desert and then hunt animals such as white gazelles and rabbits. In the last five years around a thousand gazelles have been killed by some 120 hunters in Egypt's western Marsa Matruh region, according to guides who accompany the hunters.

Israeli army gets first code of ethics

TEL AVIV (AFP) — The first code of ethics has been published for the Israeli army, the head of army personnel said here Monday. General Yoram Yair told a press conference the code had taken three years to draw up and "crowned the experience of several generations of Israeli soldiers and those from other armies around the world."

It was based on "the traditions of the Jewish people and the state of Israel, as well as democratic values and those of the Tsahal (Israeli army)," the general said. It was particularly aimed at young soldiers, he added. "The ultimate aim of Israeli troops is to defeat in war and to achieve missions assigned to them. That brings them face to face with extreme and conflicting situations when it comes to values," the code says. It calls on troops to show courage, commitment and initiative in their missions and stresses the need to respect human life.

Calves slaughtered for Palestinian police wake

GAZA (R) — The commander of the Palestinian police force in self-rule Gaza slaughtered calves and served a feast to hundreds at a funeral wake for his mother at police headquarters on Monday, a senior police officer said. "Our generous people donated three calves for free," said a police colonel, who asked not to be named. The wake was held for the mother of police chief Brigadier General Ghazi Al-Jabali, who died in Amman. The colonel said more than 2,000 people attended the feast that included the freshly-cooked veal as well as other Middle Eastern delicacies.

JORDAN TELEVISION

Tel: 773111-19

PROGRAMME TWO

17:00 ... Pollards
17:28 ... "Que Le Meilleur Gagne"
18:00 ... Embargo Porte I
19:00 ... News in French
20:00 ... Practical Guide to the Universe
19:45 ... Vertices
20:00 ... P.R.I. The Untold Stories
20:30 ... Quantum Leap
21:15 ... The Deep Probe
22:00 ... News in English
22:20 ... First Circle
23:10 ... The Right Files

PRAYER TIMES

Fajr
06:28 ... (Sunrise) Dhuhr
11:35 ... Asr
14:19 ... Magrib
16:41 ... Isha

CHURCHES

St. Mary of Nazareth Church Tel. 624590
Assembly of God Church, Tel. 632753
St. John Church Tel. 624590
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 637440
De La Salle Church Tel. 661737
Terranossa Church Tel. 622366
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 632561

Anglican Church Tel. 630651. Tel.
628543.
American Catholic Church Tel.
71331.
Assumption Orthodox Church Tel.
775261.
St. Ephraim Church Tel. 771751.
Assumption International Church Tel.
652526.
Evangelical Lutheran Church Tel.
824328.

German-speaking Evangelical Congregation Tel: 684195

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints Tel. 654992.
Church of Nazareth Tel. 6735691.
The Evangelical Zion Church in Amman
Tel. 811295

WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology.

The Kingdom will be affected by a low depression, therefore, rainy weather will prevail starting Wednesday afternoon until Friday. Wind will be northwesterly moderate.

Min (Max) temp.

Amman 5/18

Aqaba 11/25

Deserts 3/18

Jordan Valley 10/23

Yesterday's high temperatures:

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

EMERGENCIES

Food Control Centre 637111
Civil Defence Department 661111
Civil Defence Immediate Response 637341
Civil Defence Emergency 637777
Police Force 192, 621111, 677777
Fire Brigade 617101
Blood Bank 772121
Highway Police 634302
Traffic Police 636390
Police Secret Department 630011
Hotel Complaints 603800
Price Complaints 661176
Water and Sewerage Complaints 661912
Firdous Pharmacy 778336
Al Aslam Pharmacy 632072
Yacoub Pharmacy 644945
Shamsiyan Pharmacy 637660
Nasirouli Pharmacy 623672
Najib Pharmacy 847632

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

NIGHT DUTY

AMMAN:
Dr. Fakher Belbeisi 663412
Dr. Ghaleb Zawaidi 736071
Dr. Yousef Nasar 731144
Dr. Khalidou Asfour 666873
Firdous Pharmacy 661912
Al Aslam Pharmacy 632072
Yacoub Pharmacy 644945
Shamsiyan Pharmacy 637660
Nasirouli Pharmacy 623672
Najib Pharmacy 847632

IRBID:

Dr. Mohammad Al Khalili 273099

Al Quds Pharmacy (—)

ZARQA:

Dr. Tareq Hijawi 985445

Khalifeh Pharmacy 985417

HOSPITALS

AMMAN:
Hamra Medical Center 613813/32
Khalid Maternity, J. Amer 6438745
Alich Maternity, J. Amer 6434112
Joban Maternity Maternity 6434112
Muham J. Amer 6344-66
Palace, Shmeissane 64417144
Shmeissane Hospital 669135
University Hospital 643865
Al-Mansour Hospital 6672209
The Islamic, Alshab 6612707
Al-Ahli, Abdali 6641846
Ibn Al-Haitham 6710913
Al-Batir, J. Abdallah 7311303
Army, Jdeida 59181115
Queen Alia Hospital 60224890
Aida Hospital 6344355

ZARQA:

Zarqa Govt. Hospital 09790323

Zarqa National Hospital 099903560

Ibtis Hospital 097906732

Al-Husna Motor Hospital 097907978

FOR THE TRAVELLER QUEEN ALIA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

ARRIVALS
Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights (Terminal 1)
06:00 ... Amman (RJ)
06:00 ... Frankfurt, Berlin (add) (RJ)
06:20 ... Paris (RJ)
06:20 ... Rome (RJ)
06:20 ... Amsterdam, New York (RJ)
06:20 ... Berlin, London (RJ)
06:20 ... Tokyo, Canada (RJ)
06:20 ... Doha, Abu Dhabi (RJ)
06:20 ... Larnaca (RJ)
06:20 ... The Islamic, Abdali (RJ)
06:20 ... The Islamic, Alshab (RJ)
06:20 ... Al-Ahli, Abdali (RJ)
06:20 ... Ibn Al-Haitham (RJ)
06:20 ... Al-Batir, J. Abdallah (RJ)
06:20 ... Army, Jdeida (RJ)
06:20 ... Queen Alia Int'l. Airport (RJ)
12:00 ... Paris (RJ)
12:00 ... Brussels, Vienna (RJ)
12:00 ... Madrid, Geneva (RJ)
12:00 ... London (RJ)
12:00 ... Berlin (RJ)
12:00 ... Rome (RJ)
21:15 ... Berlin (RJ)
21:15 ... Beirut (RJ)
23:00 ... Beirut (RJ)
05:00 ... Cairo (RJ)
05:00 ... Cairo (RJ)

Other Flights (Terminal 2)

07:45 ... Beirut (ME)

10:30 ... Cairo (MS)

11:30 ... Rome (TY)

12:00 ... Cairo (MS)

12:00 ... Susan (TY)

12:00 ... Jeddah (SV)

12:00 ... Rome (AZ)

12:00 ... Abu Dhabi (GF)

12:00 ... Sharjah (AH)

15:00 ... Abu Dhabi, Karachi (PA)

17:00 ... Abu Dhabi, Doha (GF)

17:00 ... Aden (TY)

22:00 ... Larnaca (CY)

14:05 ... Karachi, Abu Dhabi (PK)
19:00 ... Larnaca (CY)
20:00 ... Beirut (ME)
23:00 ... Athens (OA)

HIJAZ RAILWAY TRAIN

DEPARTURES Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights (Terminal 1)

06:00 ... Amman (RJ)

06:00 ... Frankfurt, Berlin (add) (RJ)

06:20 ... Paris (RJ)

06:20 ... Rome (RJ)

06:20 ... Amsterdam, New York (RJ)

06:20 ... Berlin, London (RJ)

06:20 ... Tokyo, Canada (RJ)

06:20 ... Doha, Abu Dhabi (RJ)

06:20 ... Larnaca (RJ)

06:20 ... The Islamic, Abdali (RJ)

06:20 ... The Islamic, Alshab (RJ)

06:20 ... Al-Ahli, Abdali (RJ)

06:20 ... Ibn Al-Haitham (RJ)

06:20 ... Al-Batir, J. Abdallah (RJ)

06:20 ... Army, Jdeida (RJ)

06:20 ... Queen Alia Int'l. Airport (RJ)

12:00 ... Paris (RJ)

12:00 ... Brussels, Vienna (RJ)

12:00 ... Madrid, Geneva (RJ)

12:00 ... London (RJ)

12:00 ... Berlin (RJ)

12:00 ... Rome (RJ)

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H.R.H. Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent, Tuesday visits with leaders of the Christian community to wish them and their congregations a merry Christmas.

Regent visits Christian leaders on occasion of Christmas

AMMAN (Petra) — H.R.H. Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent, Tuesday wished the heads of the Christian communities a merry Christmas, noting that the holiday this year coincides with the Muslim feast of Al Isra and Miraj making it a doubly joyous season for the entire Jordanian family.

Speaking during a visit to the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate in Sweifieh, the Regent said he was also conveying holiday greetings from His Majesty King Hussein.

"We share with you your joy at Christmas, and together we remember the Islamic-Christian co-existence and close relations over centuries," said Prince Hassan at his meeting with Patriarch Diodorus II, Greek Orthodox Patriarch of Jerusalem, Bishop Salim Sayegh, head of the Roman Catholic community in Jordan and Father Nabil Haddad, a

Greek Catholic priest and head of the Jordan Caritas, as well as a group of prominent Christian citizens.

"We live as a united family in these holy lands, and we both work together towards deepening our faith in a climate characterised by affection and solidarity," said Prince Hassan.

He added that the time has come for all the world's nations to live in peace.

Referring to a message he received Tuesday from Pope John Paul II, the Regent said that the pontiff spoke of humanitarian issues, the role of women and the need to educate all members of society.

The Crown Prince said he hoped that by next Christmas the whole world would recognise the full rights of the Arab citizens living in this region and that all would enjoy a free and dignified life.

Greek Orthodox priest Adib Amman delivered an address on behalf of the Christian community leaders reaffirming all their congregations' allegiance to the Hashemite throne, pledging to work together towards safeguarding peaceful coexistence with all other communities and protecting the nation under the leadership of King Hussein.

Father Adib said the Regent's visit reflected the Hashemite family's determination to ensure justice, equality and freedom for all Jordanian citizens.

The Regent was accompanied on the visit by his advisor Mohammad Saqaf and the director of his office, Michel Hamarneh, along with Sheikh Izzeddin Al Khatab Al Tamimi, the chief Islamic justice and Minister of Awqaf, and Islamic Affairs Abdul Salam Al Abadi.

Poultry farmers protest animal feed 'shortage'

AMMAN (Petra) — Poultry farmers gathered at the Ministry of Supply animal feed distribution centre at Jweideh, south of Amman, Tuesday to protest what they said were insufficient amounts of feed, especially corn in the past week.

The majority of the farmers signed a petition and sent it to Prime Minister Abdil Salam Majali explaining that the shortage of animal feed would adversely affect their business.

Some farmers claimed that the centre was conducting a year end inventory, and thus temporarily suspended the distribution of animal feed.

In their petition to the Prime Minister, the farmers said that they would resort to buying flour, semolina and wheat to feed their animals, adding that they feared that many of the birds would die.

The petition, which urged the premier to intervene on their behalf, said that the Ministry of Supply's practice would create what they called a black market, which, they said, would force the farmers to abandon their businesses altogether.

The farmers demanded

that the distribution centres be opened and that sufficient corn be made available for sale.

In reply, Ministry of Supply Secretary General Mustafa Khleifat said that corn was in sufficient supply at the ministry's silos.

He also said that a vessel laden with 50,000 tonnes of corn is due to dock at Aqaba on Jan. 5, and the ministry has floated a tender for the importation of 100,000 tonnes of corn before the end of next month.

Mr. Khleifat said that Jordan's monthly need of corn for animal feed is 25,000 tonnes.

Noting that the ministry maintains a six-month supply of animal feed, Mr. Khleifat stressed that there was no truth in rumours that the ministry intended to raise the price of corn.

He charged that some farmers try to buy additional amounts of corn so that they can sell it in the black market, and the ministry was determined to prevent this sort of illicit activity.

Mr. Khleifat announced also that the ministry will



Poultry farmers Tuesday gather outside the Jweideh animal feed distribution centre to protest what they see as insufficient supplies of feed (Petra photo)

stop selling all kinds of food stuffs and animal feed for

three days starting Wednesday to allow for the annual

inventory by joint committees from the ministries of

Supply and Finance and the Audit Bureau.

HOME NEWS IN BRIEF

Cabinet raises doctors' allowance

AMMAN (Petra) — The Cabinet Tuesday raised the doctors' allowance to 10 per cent of the base salary for specialists and 30 per cent for general practitioners, according to Health Minister Aref Batayneh. The minister said the increase was necessary to ensure equity. The raise will take effect as of January 1995. Dr. Batayneh said.

Senate refers budget to committee

AMMAN (Petra) — The Upper House of

Parliament Tuesday referred the draft fiscal budget for 1995 to its Finance Committee. The budget was passed Monday by the Lower House after a three-day debate attended by Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali and Cabinet ministers. The Upper House also elected Senator Ahmad Tarawneh as second deputy speaker in accordance with Article 6 of the Upper House statute. The Senate meeting under Speaker Ahmad Lawzi, also elected Qasim Obeidat as member of the Senate Foreign Affairs Committee. The Senate session was attended by the Prime Minister and Cabinet ministers.

Israel hopes for Gulf ties

(Continued from page 1)

Israel plans at the expense of the Arab interests," the statement said.

Iran, which has good relations with Oman, also criticised the visit.

Tehran Radio warned that the United States and the "Zionist state had a coordinated plan to expand the sphere of capitulation to cover" the Gulf Arab states.

"But the expansion of relations between the Zionist regime and Arab leaders could create internal problems and raise questions about the legitimacy" of Arab leaders before their people, it said in a commentary.

A statement issued by a 10-member Palestinian alliance opposed to the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO)-Israeli peace deal described Mr. Rabin's visit as a "dangerous step on the undesired process of Arab normalisation of ties with Israel."

"The visit reflects the rush of some Arab regimes to implement the American-

peace process and to create a new fait accompli that will cast a shadow on negotiations on the final status of the occupied Palestinian land," he said.

Ibrahim Salah, a Palestinian from El Khader, said: "I am worried about my land because we are faced with a government of gangsters."

Ephrata settlers were in no mood to allay Palestinian fears. "The Arabs think if we build here today, we will build where they live tomorrow," said 30-year-old Hen Sason.

"They are right to be scared, because that is exactly what we will do."

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U.S. envoy heads to N. Korea; Pyongyang repeats spy claim

SEOUL (R) — A U.S. diplomat was en route to North Korea Tuesday to discuss the release of a captured American helicopter pilot whom North Korea says was on a spying mission who he was shot down over its territory 10 days ago.

North Korea raised the tempo by releasing a photograph it said was of Chief Warrant Officer Bobby Hall after his capture on Dec. 17. The photo shows a man in a flying kit, looking tense, with his hands up.

U.S. Cable News Network said North Korea's official news agency also released a photograph it said was of the wreckage of the helicopter. A U.S. military spokesman in

Seoul said it was too early to confirm the authenticity of the photographs.

The North has said Officer Hall is in good health but it has not allowed foreign contact with him.

The United States has expressed regret at what it called an accidental intrusion by the helicopter. But North Korea said what it termed an act of espionage needed further investigation under military law.

Its official Korean Central News Agency (KCNA) monitored in London Monday said Washington must "admit its responsibility as the offender" and show a reasonable attitude "before it is too late".

It said official investigations had shown this was not

an "accidental case" caused by a "mistake", but a deliberate act of espionage. "Detaining and investigating criminals is a matter related to our dignified sovereignty," it said.

"We categorically deny that it was on that kind of flight," said Jim Coles, a spokesman for the U.S. military in Seoul. "This was a routine training mission that unfortunately strayed into North Korean airspace."

KCNA said the Helicopter

was seven kilometres inside its territory when it was brought down in flames by a single shot in the Ipho-Ri area of the eastern province of Kangwon. It said the aircraft ignored two warning signals and tried to escape.

Scalfaro tries to solve Italian political crisis

ROME (R) — President Oscar Luigi Scalfaro resumed his search for a solution to Italy's deep political crisis Tuesday as outgoing Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi maintained pressure for a return to the ballot box.

Billionaire businessman Berlusconi, toppled last week by a rebellion by his Northern League coalition partner, evoked the spectre of a "communist" takeover as he outlined his opposition to a broad-based transitional government.

Northern League leader Umberto Bossi and Rocco Buttiglione, head of the small centrist Popular Party, are willing to work with the ex-communist Democratic Party of the Left in a new government to complete institutional reform before Italians are asked to vote again.

But that prospect fills media mogul Berlusconi with dread. "We are certain about one thing: We will never let Bossi and Buttiglione hand Italy over to the communists," Mr. Berlusconi said Monday night.

Judge Di Pietro, a folk hero for his work in uncovering corruption, quit his magistrate's job earlier this month complaining that a political tug-of-war had developed over his work.

Mr. Buttiglione said the Forza Italia Party had a right to request to head a new government.

"We are moving toward the formation of a new government that will certainly not last four years — but it will surely last for more than four days," Mr. Buttiglione told reporters.

If Forza Italia agrees that this new government should tackle Italy's most urgent problems, they not only have the right to take part in it — they also have the right to ask to lead it. They are the party with the relative majority."

Mr. Buttiglione's opening to Forza Italia marks a change of tack for the Popular Party which linked up with the Northern League in the south and he regards the League's decision to break ranks as treachery.

Mr. Berlusconi is staging a snap general election and wants Mr. Scalfaro, arbiter in Italy's deepest political crisis for nearly two decades, to reappoint him as prime minister in the run-up to polls which could be held by late March.

But Mr. Berlusconi's opponents argue that his control of television through his three private channels and his appointments at state broadcaster Rai would make it impossible to stage a fair electoral campaign.

They also argue that a new electoral system used for the first time last March is flawed and needs refining.

Mr. Scalfaro, reported to

China, Burma discuss border, economy

RANGOON (R) — Chinese Prime Minister Li Peng discussed border and economic issues with his Burmese counterpart Tuesday in the second day of a visit aimed at sealing ties with the ruling military regime.

Chinese officials said they were satisfied with the development of border trade with Burma, and the two governments urged the state and private sectors to expand burgeoning trade links, a Chinese spokesman said. Mr. Li and Prime Minister Than Shwe, chairman of the State Law and Order Restoration Council (SLORC) that came to power in 1988 after suppressing pro-democracy protests, also discussed joint efforts to combat drug trafficking.

In a banquet speech Monday night, Mr. Li recalled that the two countries had maintained friendly relations since establishing diplomatic ties 44 years ago.

Mr. Li praised Burma's abundant harvests, including record rice production, and its "laudable efforts in maintaining social stability, promoting national reconciliation and making contacts with the outside world."

China has steadfastly supported Burma against foreign criticism for human rights abuses and its main trading partner and arms supplier.

Gen. Than Shwe referred to the "five principles of peaceful coexistence" which characterised Sino-Burmese relations.

Burma and China earlier pledged a joint war against Golden Triangle heroin traffickers whose cross-border activities have thrived during China's 15 years of economic reforms.

The violence was the worst in the Haitian capital since American troops restored ousted President Jean-

Bertrand Aristide in October under a deal with the country's military rulers.

Under the U.S.-backed deal that restored Aristide, the army, blamed for many of the killings and other human rights abuses during three years of military rule, is to be restructured and sharply reduced.

"A bunch of them were to be fired today, and apparently they didn't want to go without a fight," said one American soldier.

Mr. Kelly said when the shooting began some of the protesters broke into a weapons locker at the military headquarters.

When they emerged from the building, they were confronted by U.S. soldiers, who "fired back," he said.

More than 30 people were taken into custody, but it was uncertain how many would be charged, Mr. Kelly said.

"I think we have to let the smoke settle to see what this means," he said.

One witness, Patrick Ajenor, said the unrest started when two of the protesting soldiers slapped army chief of staff General Mondeir Beaubrun outside the military headquarters.

"Two soldiers attacked General Beaubrun. They

slapped him. He shot the two soldiers and they fell on the ground," Mr. Ajenor said.

That account could not immediately be confirmed.

Haitian soldiers at the headquarters then opened fire with automatic weapons, according to Mr. Ajenor. Gen. Beaubrun's assistant was wounded as the general made his escape, he said.

An unidentified American soldier said some of the bullets flew across the plaza to the National Palace, where American soldiers returned fire.

Members of the multinational peacekeeping force in Haiti responded to the shooting, taking an hour to secure the headquarters, U.S. military interpreters used loudspeakers to tell Haitian military personnel to come out.

"If you don't we're going to come in the door and you could get killed, if you come out nothing will happen to you," the interpreters announced.

One of the wounded was airlifted in a U.S. army helicopter to a military hospital, said U.S. army Major Regina Largent, head of the Joint Information Bureau.

No members of the multinational force were wounded, she said.

Republicans to begin 100 days of reform

WASHINGTON (R) — Republicans, who in January take control of both the House of Representatives and the Senate for the first time in 40 years, are poised to transform the way the United States is governed.

Under the leadership of Newt Gingrich in the House and Robert Dole in the Senate, 231 Republican representatives and 53 senators will begin their task beginning Jan. 4 when the 104th Congress begins its new session.

Mr. Gingrich has promised that the first day will be "the longest opening day in history" and will begin the "100 days" to implement the so-called Contract With America signed by 300 Republicans.

The plan, drawn up before the Nov. 8 elections that routed Democrats and rocked the White House, contains the adoption of nine reforms, notably one that would require any tax increase to be approved by three-fifths of Congress.

The plan would also transfer from the federal government to the states social welfare programmes created during the 1960s which, according to Mr. Gingrich, have "created a culture of poverty and a culture of violence."

One of the first items of reform that is sure to be adopted is a constitutional amendment that would require the government to be

ratified by the 50 U.S. states, would not go into effect until 2002.

Republicans must still explain how they will do this with a plan that calls for increasing defence spending while cutting taxes.

But tax cuts are virtually assured given that President Bill Clinton has also proposed lowering taxes, though the Republicans differ over how much of a tax break to give Americans.

Under the Republican Contract With America, a \$500 tax credit per child would be given to those families earning \$200,000 or less while Mr. Clinton would give a tax credit to those families earning less than \$75,000.

Both sides agree on the need to reform the social welfare system that has ballooned astronomically since its inception, though they disagree over how to go about doing it.

Republicans propose cutting off aid to unwed mothers younger than 18 while states would be allowed to cut off welfare to anyone who has been on the rolls for at least two years.

Anyone looking for assistance must also be willing to take jobs offered by the state.

Also under the Contract With America, legislators could serve no more than 12 years, or two six-year terms for senators and six two-year terms for representatives to replace what some Republicans called "career politicians

with citizens legislators."

For the Republicans to push their plan past Mr. Clinton, they will have to stick together as they are pushed and pulled by conservative "revolutionary" Gingrich and the more pragmatic Dole, a likely 1996 presidential candidate.

Presidential election primary campaigns get underway in about a year and possible compromises in 1995 between a Democratic White House and a Republican Congress will become increasingly difficult as the election approaches.

The incoming Republican-run Congress has pledged to boost the Pentagon's budget, reviving programmes from the Reagan years, but defence officials would rather trim down funds they say they don't need.

That message was made loud and clear by Congress' most powerful voice on the subject, future Senate Armed Services Committee Chairman Strom Thurmond.

The 92-year-old South Carolina lawmaker is asking political allies to oppose any cuts in the new year.

Though Republicans traditionally criticise Democrats for slashing defence funding too eagerly, the two parties for several years have agreed to streamline the Pentagon. The 1995 budget, at \$264 billion, was adopted with minimal wrangling last

autumn.

President Bill Clinton's administration and the Congress now are eyeing the 1996 defence budget, which the Defence Department projects at about \$246 billion — down six per cent taking inflation into account.

Thurmond's view is that the budget is at least \$12 billion short.

When the Republicans swept the Democrats out of control of both houses of Congress, Sen. Thurmond went on the offensive, saying his job at the helm of the key Senate defence committee would be to increase military spending.

That followed remarks by his House of Representatives defence counterpart, Floyd Spence, who raised questions on Nov. 15 about the preparedness of U.S. forces, pushing the Pentagon to acknowledge three of 12 army divisions were not adequately trained.

The Republicans worry that the Defence Department simply does not have the money it needs to pursue its current overall strategy, which is to be able to handle simultaneously two major regional conflicts on the scale of the 1990 Gulf War.

And they strenuously oppose contributing U.S. troops to international operations and humanitarian efforts unless major U.S. interests are at stake.

China to crack down on fake medicines

BEIJING (R) — China is to crack down on the production and sale of substandard and bogus medicines, some of which are toxic, the official China Daily said Tuesday. "Individuals and units found to profit from producing and selling fake or substandard medicines will be punished severely," it quoted state councilor Peng Peixun as saying. "All units which failed to meet state requirements must be closed and the situation must be rectified within a prescribed period of time or they will be banned from business," Mr. Peng was quoted as saying at a conference of pharmaceutical administrators. More than 80,000 cases of production or sale of fake or substandard medical products have been reported in China since 1985, the newspaper said. Some of the fake medicines were toxic, it said. Beijing will begin a national inspection of medicine producers and sellers early next year and introduce a new license system to regulate the industry, it said. Rural medicine fairs dealing in items other than traditional Chinese herbs must be banned, the newspaper quoted State Pharmaceutical Administration Director Zheng Xiaoyu as saying. The government plans to provide more medical trading centres for China's rural and transient population, it said.

Crimes by China's spoiled children soar

BEIJING (R) — Juvenile crime in China soared in the first nine months of this year, much of it blamed on violent films, pornographic videos and spoiled children, the Xinhua News Agency said Tuesday. "Crimes, especially serious crimes committed by the young, have been climbing significantly, with 70 per cent more relating to property and sex," Xinhua said, without giving any examples. One official blamed the increase on illegal publication of pornographic books as well as violent or pornographic videos and films, rising divorce rates and spoiled children, Xinhua said. More than 27,000 juvenile delinquents under 18 faced judicial penalties in first nine months of 1994, Wang Jingrong, vice-president of the Supreme People's Court, told Xinhua. In all of 1993, the courts sentenced 32,000 young criminals, Wang said. Juvenile courts, which first appeared in Shanghai 10 years, now parallel almost every people's court across China at the county level, Mr. Wang said, adding that China now has more than 3,000 such courts.

Christmas twins have true seasonal bash

FLITCHAM, England (R) — It was a real seasonal bash for twins Lorraine and Levia Christmas, who were in hospital Monday after crashing head-on as they headed to one another's homes to deliver Christmas presents. The 31-year-old sisters, each driving her own car, collided on a narrow, icy country lane Saturday, the day before Christmas, police said. Family members told British newspapers they were delivering presents to one another. "People always say the twins always do things together," said their mother Joan Christmas. "It is remarkable they crashed into each other this time of year." "We did a double take when we first received details of the accident. We thought it was a practical joke," a police spokesman said. The two were being treated for chest injuries, whiplash and concussion at a hospital in Norfolk, Eastern England.

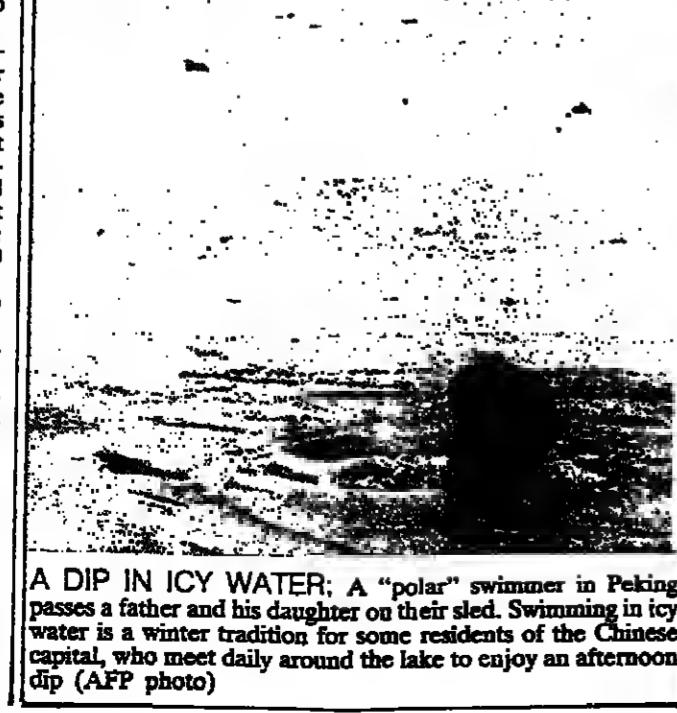
Smooth sailing at last for QE2

NEW YORK (R) — The QE2, which left New York in a driving storm Saturday after construction problems turned its trans-Atlantic voyage into a fiasco, has finally hit sunny skies. After being delayed 37 hours in New York to correct safety violations found by the Coast Guard, the luxury liner was cruising the Caribbean Monday in weather described by the ship's radio operator as "lovely." The trouble-plagued liner headed into 50-knot wind gusts and 25-foot (7.6-metre) waves when its Caribbean Christmas cruise finally got underway Saturday. Many of the previous groups of passengers who crossed the Atlantic to New York last week found the trip anything but enjoyable.



ONE-WOMAN EXPEDITION. Norwegian Travel Agency clerk Liv Arnesen (41) gives a thumbs-up while sitting on her sledge on this recent file picture, taken in Antarctica prior to the start of her One-Woman expedition to the South Pole. Ms. Arnesen, who started the 1,150 kilometers trip on Nov. 5 at

the Hercules Inlet Base, became the first woman ever to have reached the South Pole in a single-person expedition in the early Dec. 25 morning hours, sending out a message "Finished South Pole" by a satellite phone (AFP photo)



A DIP IN ICY WATER: A "polar" swimmer in Peking passes a father and his daughter on their sled. Swimming in icy water is a winter tradition for some residents of the Chinese capital, who meet daily around the lake to enjoy an afternoon dip (AFP photo)

World News



Centrist, leftist groups gain from Rao's troubles

NEW DELHI (Agencies) — The resignation of a senior Indian cabinet minister gives India's leftists and centrist opposition groups an important edge in their struggle with Prime Minister P.V. Narasimha Rao, analysts said Tuesday.

As Mr. Rao grapples with corruption and growing dissent in his Congress Party, the resignation of Human Resources Development Minister Arjun Singh threatens the party's support from Muslims and lower-caste Hindus before crucial state polls.

Mr. Singh resigned Saturday, accusing Mr. Rao of betraying India's 120 million Muslims and not doing enough to bring the lower-caste Hindus into the national power structure.

Recent elections have shown the votes of both groups, traditional Congress supporters, are vital for any party.

"Congress will be dead without the minorities and backward castes," said Welfare Minister Sharad Kesi, a close Rao ally and a shrewd party tactician.

He accused Mr. Singh of "deserting the battlefield in a time of crisis."

But Mr. Singh denied he was betraying the party or trying to split it. In his resignation letter, he accused Mr. Rao of watching silently as a Hindu mob razed a 400-year-old mosque in the northern town of Ayodhya in December 1992.

"This dark deed commit-

ted by vandals, inspired by religious fanatics, not only destroyed the structure but, in fact, seriously compromised the commitment of this republic to the ideals on which it was founded," Mr. Singh told Mr. Rao.

Ensuing Hindu-Muslim riots killed at least 2,000, mostly Muslims.

"It would be proper for the Congress Party to go on record publicly seeking an apology on this account," he said.

Mr. Singh also accused Mr. Rao of not doing enough to stop the exploitation of the lower castes and other socially-backward Hindu groups.

"We should initiate steps immediately to give them the levers of economic empowerment so that they also start acquiring a stake in the economic progress of the country," Mr. Singh said.

"There are many areas of trade and commerce at the local level in which the labour of these sections of the people at the moment is mainly exploited."

Analysts said Mr. Singh's position was beginning to resemble that of the centrist Janata Dal Party. Newspapers said he was also likely to gain support from the influential Communist-led Left Front.

Left parties and left-of-the-centre parties may not be quite averse to joining hands with Arjun Singh as the issues raised by him, like reforms with a human face and regaining the confidence of the minorities, are also

dear to them," the Times of India said Tuesday.

It quoted unidentified ministers, who proclaimed their loyalty to Mr. Rao last week, as secretly approving of Mr. Singh's letter.

"I am with Mr. Rao, but how can I honestly say that the issues Mr. Arjun Singh has raised are not something that concern all of us?" the Times quoted one minister as saying.

Congress was trounced in recent state polls by the Janata Dal and its regional centrist allies.

Spurred on by the victory, the Janata Dal, which ruled India at the head of a minority government for 11 months from December 1989, was organising itself as a force in the politically important Congress-ruled Maharashtra state.

Any division of votes between Congress and Janata Dal could help bring a right-wing Hindu coalition to power in Maharashtra, analysts said.

The state is one of five due to hold assembly polls in February. Of these, Orissa and Bihar are ruled by the lower caste Hindu-based Janata Dal. Gujarat has a Congress government as does the fifth state of Arunachal Pradesh.

Analysts said Mr. Singh's revolt and the expected deselection of the Congress' remaining support among Muslims and lower-caste Hindus had made it difficult for Mr. Rao to stave off defeat.

Meanwhile the Congress

party is anxiously watching the window of former Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi as it grapples with a leadership crisis.

Sonia Gandhi, 47, is widely believed to be pulling political strings from her heavily-guarded downtown home in the bitter inner-party struggle aimed at ousting Prime Minister P.V. Narasimha Rao.

Mr. Singh is known to hold Sonia Gandhi in high regard.

He met her at least twice before his dramatic resignation, and newspapers say he showed her his seven-page resignation letter, a virtual indictment of the Rao government, before sending it to the premier.

The Italian-horn widow, who does not meet the press and has previously turned down requests to enter politics, has not commented on the report. Her recent closed-door meetings with Mr. Arjun Singh remains a mystery.

Political observers have been quick to conclude that Mrs. Sonia Gandhi, who is counted among the most powerful figures in the country although she holds no government or political post, may be quietly backing Mr. Singh.

Hundreds of Sikhs came from his home state of Punjab to the funeral, where Hindu, Muslim, Sikh, Christian and Buddhist prayers were chanted.

"He (Zail Singh) was our pride. All of us loved him a lot. I would have even walked from Chandigarh to be at his funeral," said Autar Singh Grewal, a truck-owner who drove his vehicle through the cold night to attend.

We consider that discussions (with the government) are ongoing although at an informal level currently," Mr. Ivanko said. "We still hope that the position of the Bosnian government will not derail the peace process."

Mr. Ivanko said talks held Monday with both sides had proved "positive and useful."

Indian elite lead Singh's funeral

NEW DELHI (R) — India's elite led thousands of mourners Tuesday at the funeral of former President Zail Singh, cremated according to his Sikh religion on the banks of the holy Yamuna River.

The body of Mr. Singh, India's first Sikh president, was carried from his central Delhi home to the Vijaygat cremation ground, close to memorials of India's founding fathers Jawaharlal Nehru and Mahatma Gandhi.

Top officers of the army, navy and air force accompanied the body on its 11-kilometre journey, watched by thousands who lined the pavements to pay homage to a man who rose from a simple farming family.

Mr. Singh, who was 78, died in the northern city of Chandigarh Sunday after suffering multiple fractures when his car was hit by a truck on Nov. 29. A government inquiry found nothing suspicious in the accident.

And the recent rumblings within the 109-year-old Congress against Mr. Rao have coincided with fresh demands that the charismatic Sonia Gandhi be drafted into the party to give it a new look that would click with voters.

Meanwhile the Congress

U.N. claims progress in Bosnia negotiations

SARAJEVO (R) — U.N. officials said Tuesday they were making progress in talks although operations in the Bihać enclave were jeopardizing the talks.

Bosnian Vice-President Ejup Ganic said his government would not discuss details of a proposed four-month cessation of hostilities until Serb forces from Croatia and Bosnia halted military activities in the northwest enclave of Bihać.

U.N. officials want to take advantage of the truce to negotiate an accord for a four-month cessation of hostilities and a resumption of peace talks aimed at ending the 33-month-old war in the former Yugoslavia.

But the latest ceasefire pact was not signed by Croatian Serb and rebel Muslim forces attacking government troops in the Bihać enclave.

The United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR) reported mostly sporadic firing in Bosnia while the Bihać enclave remained tense.

Nine detonations were reported east of Bihać town Monday and a dozen shells or mortar bombs landed southwest of Velika Kladusa, in the north of the Bihać enclave, UNPROFOR said.

Mr. Ganic accused Serb forces of trying to tighten their hold on Kladusa, which fell into Serb and rebel Muslim hands earlier this month.

"They are trying to enlarge their presence in Velika Kladusa and we are trying to stop them," said Mr. Ganic.

Bosnian government troops were badly mauled by

an allied Bosnian and Croat Serb counter-offensive in November which enabled rebels to recapture Velika Kladusa.

The United Nations said aid convoys were allowed free movement generally through Bosnia but Croatian Serbs and rebel Muslims were still obstructing regular food deliveries to the Bihać enclave.

A U.N. food convoy reached the town of Cazin in the Bihać enclave Tuesday after Serb and rebel Muslim forces held up the convoy for five days, said Peter Kessler, a spokesman for the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).

Shooting and shelling in and around Sarajevo has subsided since the Christmas Eve truce went into effect but Serb forces laying siege to the city were restricting delivery of firewood, the UNHCR said.

Fuel convoys for the U.N. mission were still facing restrictions and delays by Bosnian Serbs, limiting the ability of peacekeeping troops to monitor the latest ceasefire, Mr. Ivanko said.

"If one of the sides comes to us and asks us to investigate a ceasefire violation somewhere we can say to them we don't have the fuel because that's the situation. We need to build up our fuel stocks," Mr. Ivanko said.

Bangladesh walk-out deadline approaches

DHAKA (R) — Bangladeshi opposition parties on Tuesday said the government had offered no compromise or concession that might persuade them to cancel their threat to resign en masse Wednesday from parliament.

Government offices were closed and state media played solemn music to mark the third day of the seven-day mourning period, during which no official entertainment will take place.

Mr. Singh, appointed by then-Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, served as president from 1982 to 1987. He was called "Giani," or seer, for his mastery of Sikh scriptures.

He faced a crisis in June 1984 after troops stormed the Golden Temple, the holiest Sikh shrine in the northern town of Amritsar, to flush out militants demanding a separate Sikh state in Punjab.

The president faced hostility from his own community, but feelings subsided after he played a crucial role in the withdrawal of the troops.

"His perseverance during that crisis period will always be remembered," said Rupan Singh, a member of the Akali Dal, a Sikh political party.

Otherwise, she warned, opposition members, who have been boycotting parliament since February, would formally quit the legislature on Dec. 28 — Wednesday.

The latest truce proposal came Tuesday from Shahidul Huq Jamal, a member of parliament from the ruling Bangladesh Nationalist Party and chairman of the Bangladesh Red Crescent Society, opposition leaders said.

26 killed in South African province

DURBAN, South Africa (AFP) — At least 26 people, including eight who were gunned down in their family home, were killed in a violence-wracked Christmas weekend in KwaZulu-Natal province, police said Tuesday.

In another incident, three men were killed when gunmen armed with automatic weapons opened fire on a family in Inanda black township outside this coastal city, Col. Naidoo said.

The eight, all members of the same family, died in a hail of bullets at dusk Monday when three gunmen burst into their rural homestead in the coastal town of Kwanza-Natal, north of here.

He said the attack, for which a motive had yet to be established, happened when the family was returning from

a party Monday.

Police were unable to establish a motive for the killings, police spokesman Colonel Bala Naidoo said.

In another incident, three men were killed when gunmen armed with automatic weapons opened fire on a family in Inanda black township outside this coastal city, Col. Naidoo said.

He said the attack, for which a motive had yet to be established, happened when the family was returning from

Record 114 journalists killed in 1994

BRUSSELS (AFP) — At least 114 journalists were killed in sometimes gruesome circumstances, making it the deadliest year for reporters ever, Aidan White, secretary general of the International Federation of Journalists, said Tuesday.

The Brussels-based federation this year registered at least 114 confirmed cases of violent death, some in grisly circumstances, he said, adding that 15 other killings and reports of journalists gone missing were still being investigated.

Forty-eight journalists from the ethnic "Hutus and Tutsis" died crushed by the conflict" in Rwanda, while in Algeria 19 journalists were killed, according to a federation tally.

But the mafia and political terrorists also claimed their toll, notably in Russia and Latin America where journalists have been brutally assassinated," said Mr. White.

The federation plans to provide guidelines for journalists' safety to encourage the media, unions and governments to act.

Such guidelines would include better information and training for journalists travelling to crisis areas along with pressure put on employers to provide better insurance and social security cover.

Governments must acknowledge that journalists' security is more and more at risk, said Mr. White.

"Freedom of the press is not, in terms of democracy, a marginal problem because without freedom of the press there is no democracy," said Mr. White.

Quake rattles Eureka, northern California

SAN FRANCISCO (R) — A 5.3-magnitude earthquake rattled nerves in the northern California city of Eureka early Monday, snapping power lines, damaging some homes and stores, and causing minor injuries.

In response to the quake, the Eureka City Council and Humboldt County Board of Supervisors both declared a state of local emergency. The declarations allow them to ask the state for earthquake relief.

City officials said there were only two reports of minor earthquake-related injuries, both caused by broken glass.

The quake was felt as far north as southern Oregon.

"I awoke to a violent shaking," Ms. Goetz said, adding that the quake lasted for only a few seconds.

Seismologists said the quake measured 5.3 on the open-ended Richter Scale, a magnitude capable of causing moderate damage.

Authorities in the city centre were forced to close a street due to a natural gas leak. Two department stores and a public library were also closed. Local bridges sustained minor damage, but

"There was some damage in downtown Eureka," said U.S. Geological Survey physical science technician Frank Baldwin. "There were reports of some broken glass."

Ms. Goetz said scattered power outages were reported for hours following the quake. By mid-morning, however, Ms. Goetz said there were no new reports of the outages.

Monday's quake, which struck along the vertical fault line of the Gorda Plateau, occurred in a seismically active area.

The last major seismic event to strike near Eureka occurred in Humboldt County on Sept. 1 and measured 7.2 on the Richter Scale. The impact of the Sept. 1 quake, however, was limited because it was centered 90 miles (145 km) off the Pacific Ocean off Eureka.

In 1992, a 7.1 quake near Eureka damaged 500 homes, injured 95 people and caused more than \$50 million in damage.

Hindu leader killed in Kashmir

SRINAGAR, India (AFP) — Muslim separatists gunned down a Hindu politician in Kashmir Tuesday, sparking Hindu mob violence and forcing authorities to call out the Indian army in the border state, police said.

Gunmen pumped bullets into Praveen Kumar, a local leader of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), Indian People's Party at his residence in Kishanpur town, in the hill district of Doda, the police said. Mr. Kumar died instantly.

Police said the killing was carried out by rebels who had been targeting BJP leaders in the region.

Angry BJP supporters poured onto the streets, attacking Muslims and their property, forcing the authorities to impose a curfew in Doda, where Muslims were preparing for the funeral of eight militants killed a day earlier.

Army troops were called out in Doda to beef up security.

"The situation is now under control," Kasbmir Police Chief Mabinder Sabharwal told AFP.

Doda, which is evenly divided between Hindus and Muslims, has seen an upsurge in violence recently by Muslim guerrillas waging a bloody campaign to end Indian rule in Kashmir.

The Hindu-nationalist BJP, India's main opposition party, wields considerable influence among the Hindus of Kashmir.

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Time for new mandate

WHEN DR. Abdul Salam Majali took over the premiership in May 1993, his mandate, as was contained in His Majesty the King's letter of designation, included holding the 1993 Parliamentary elections, the strengthening of state institutions, maintaining balance between the three branches of government, reforming the civil service, safeguarding democracy and continuing the quest for a comprehensive peace.

During the past 19 months, Dr. Majali's government has worked very hard to implement the King's directives. In the course of these months, some of the King's wishes were fulfilled. The elections were held on time and were conducted fairly, albeit with disgruntlement by Dr. Majali's antagonists. But while state institutions hardly witnessed a change, the balance between the three branches of government went through stress and strain, especially when Parliamentarians accused the Cabinet of extending its power at their expense.

Generally, our democratisation process stayed the course but not without serious complaints that freedoms were at times curbed. In all of this, the government was able to achieve one very important goal, which is peace with Israel.

Here again detractors of the government criticise, attack and say what they want about the agreement and the role the prime minister played in engineering it.

In all cases, the supporters and opponents of Dr. Majali commend him for his integrity, sincerity and honesty. Yet many of them agree that his government lacked a vision for the future of the country and that even if it had one, it failed to articulate it and, at times, only made confusing signals about it.

Now that His Majesty has signalled that change was due, the next government, whether headed by Dr. Majali or someone else, needs to translate the King's vision for the future of Jordan in the new era into concrete steps of action at all levels. Peace in the Middle East, while it lasts, presents Jordan with a golden opportunity to direct its resources, both human and material, into building a modern state that can be a model for the Arabs to emulate. The new government needs to bolster national unity with new mechanisms, needs to reform government administration with seriousness and needs to plant new roots for a wider and more participatory democracy. Even more, the new government needs to engage and mobilise the whole people in an effort to carry a genuine and credible modernisation drive.

In order to do all of this, the new government needs to be not only visionary and strong. It will have to count on wide support in the country as a whole.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

A WRITER in Al Ra'i Tuesday discussed Russia's involvement in the Chechen republic, expressing the view that the Western nations are gloating over the events there. Jihad Monani said that Chechnya was a new trap for Moscow after Afghanistan in order to drain away Moscow's remaining power. The Western world wants to keep Moscow embroiled in internal strife and in problems related to Russia's neighbours and so remove Russia from major world scenes, and belittle its influence in various parts of the world. The writer said that Moscow has committed a major blunder by being bogged down in fighting against the Chechens because the conflict would cost Russia a great deal and would further weaken the former superpower. Furthermore, the Russian rockets falling on civilian targets and killing innocent civilians would damage the credibility of the Russian regime before the eyes of the Third World, and this is one more objective of the Western plot, said the writer. He said that Washington and its Western allies are overjoyed over the developments also because they want to see Islam contained and restricted by all means.

MOHAMMAD KAWASH, a writer in Al Dustour, advocated the cause of the old pensioners, saying that they receive meagre pension not enough for their sustenance. The veteran servicemen and civil servants have the right to demand that the government do them justice and increase their pension after spending the prime of their lives serving their nation. He said it is only just and fair to give attention to those who had served their nation so diligently and faithfully but are now facing the rising prices and cannot find the means to ensure additional income sufficient for their mere sustenance. The writer said that it would not take a miracle for the government to come up with a reasonable formula to do the old pensioners' justice.

Washington Watch

By Dr. James Zogby

U.S. economic assistance and compliance with the terms of peace

WHILE THE Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) is expected to jump through hoops to qualify for limited U.S. assistance and support in the peace process, Israel receives unconditional aid in an amount that far exceeds the paltry Palestinian sum.

In addition to the annual congressional appropriation of \$3 billion (and hundreds of millions more in other defence-related contracts), this year Israeli received an outright add-on grant of \$80 million to support Russian Jewish resettlement projects. This last amount is larger than the total U.S. appropriation for fiscal year 1995 to the Palestinians.

While U.S. aid to the Palestinians is conditional on the PLO's compliance with "terms of the peace process" as defined by the U.S. Congress (which literally translates to commitments demanded by the pro-Israel lobby in Congress), U.S. aid to Israel is exempt from political conditions and is even exempt from any congressional or bureaucratic oversight. In other words, the "accountability and transparency" requirements that apply to the PLO and every other U.S. aid recipient do not apply to the government of Israel.

In order to certify that the PLO has met the conditions of U.S. aid, the State Department earlier this month issued a report on PLO performance (combating terrorism, recognising Israel's right to exist, ending the Arab boycott of Israel, etc.). The report was generally favourable and so next week the U.S. president will almost certainly declare that the PLO is qualified to receive its 1995 aid allotment.

What is troubling, however, is not only the fact that the burden of compliance falls exclusively and unfairly on only the Palestinians, but that the U.S. assistance once granted is so bureaucratically encumbered that the Palestinians do not really receive the full benefits of this aid.

Unlike the \$3 billion in U.S. aid to Israel, the \$75 million to the Palestinian is not given directly to the Palestinian national authority. In fact, Israel is the only country of all the U.S. aid recipients to receive direct cash grant. All other recipients have their aid administered by the U.S. Agency for International Development (AID), and so it is for the Palestinian aid.

U.S. aid to Palestinians

Of the \$500 million pledged by the United States at the October 12, 1993 donors conference, only \$375 million was intended as direct aid. The other \$125 million was, in fact, loan guarantees (not loans) to support U.S. private investors seeking joint ventures with Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza. The loan guarantees programme is one of the better U.S. international support projects since it provides risk insurance and guarantees for U.S. investors who use commercial bank loans to put capital to work in the West Bank and Gaza. Already, the Overseas Private Investment Corporation (OPIC), the U.S. agency that oversees the loan guarantee programme, has announced that they are working with five U.S. investors who have partnerships with West Bank and Gaza businesses. These first five joint ventures will take advantage of \$90 million in loan guarantees and political risk insurance. The \$90 million invested will generate over 4,000 jobs in the Palestinian territories.

Unfortunately, the story of direct U.S. aid is not so positive. While AID has issued its 1994 final report showing actual disbursements to West Bank and Gaza of \$75 million, almost half of that amount has not actually been disbursed. And of the amount that has been given, two-thirds has been in the form of direct assistance toward start up costs for the Palestinian Authority.

With the exception of the one aid funded housing project (which, after six months, remains a barely started foundation), the remaining millions of aid disbursements have been to the U.S. private voluntary organisation (PVOs) and some Washington-based consultant groups to provide studies, training and technical assistance either to aid itself or to Palestinians. The problem with these "technical assistance" programmes, of course, is that they do not create needed jobs or investment in Gaza and they have been designed by aid itself and awarded to U.S. contractors without any consultation with the Palestinian leadership.

For example, the \$11 million technical training programme to support the Palestinian private sector and small business development was rewarded to a U.S.-based PVO that has had no experience in the Middle East (they had received a previous AID contract in Russia).

On the other hand, since the Sept. 13, 1993 signing of the Declaration of Principles, the government of Israel has confiscated or sealed off almost 25,000 acres of Palestinian-owned land in the West Bank and Gaza. In addition,

Yitzhak Rabin government has continued to build housing units in the occupied territories at a steady pace. In what Israel calls "Greater Jerusalem" — which extends as much as 13 kilometres into the West Bank — the government has planned for the construction of 15,000 new homes (in addition to the 13,000 units started by the Likud government and now being completed by the Labour government). In the rest of the West Bank, the Labourites have planned or concluded another 4,000 new homes (in addition to the 11,500 units that were started by the Likud government which they have pledged to complete).

The Israeli government claims that the majority of the new construction is private and not government (in order to technically comply with the U.S.-Israel agreement regarding U.S. loan guarantees), but there is significant government involvement in all of this construction and, in any case, international law holds the occupying authority responsible for all such activities in areas under its control.

A number of human rights organisations have reported the continued practice by both the official occupation forces and armed groups of settlers to uproot, bulldoze or otherwise destroy Palestinian fruit trees. In just the month of October, for example, Al Haq (the Palestinian branch of the International Commission of Jurists), reported three serious instances in which settlers destroyed 558 dunums of Palestinian fruit trees.

"While U.S. aid to the Palestinians is conditional on the PLO's compliance with "terms of the peace process" as defined by the U.S. Congress (which literally translates to commitments demanded by the pro-Israel lobby in Congress), U.S. aid to Israel is exempt from political conditions and is even exempt from any congressional or bureaucratic oversight."

Equally troubling has been the impact of the closures on Palestinian trade and commerce. The closure in effect blocks Gaza and Jericho from Israel, Egypt, Jordan and the Mediterranean Sea. The results have been devastating. Unemployment has grown to 50 per cent. Exports have all but stopped and the Palestinian Gross National Product dropped by 25 per cent compared to last May. Reductions in employment result in reductions in tax collections, thereby denying the PNA needed revenues to operate basic services. This economic uncertainty in turn leads to a decline in private investment and the hope of creating results unimplemented by the Israeli government. Among them are:

1) The safe passage between Gaza and Jericho is inoperative. ... The (Graecis) insisted on blocking Gazans who use the passage to Jericho from entering the West Bank. This is in violation of the Crossing Points article (on the page 20 of the agreement) which considers passage from Jericho to the West Bank akin to passage within the West Bank, requiring no permit or even an official crossing point. In effect, Israel wants to separate Gaza from the West Bank, requiring Gazans to obtain the same permit it requires them to have when crossing into Israel.

2) Palestinian political prisoners and detainees in Israeli jails and detention camps are still there despite the Cairo agreement requirements. More than six thousand of them are still denied their freedom.

3) The Economic Agreement is only partially implemented. Taxes and customs duties are collected by Israel. Rebates to the Palestinian authority are partial and delayed. It took six months to make Palestinian import permits acceptable at Israeli entry points. Palestinian exports to Israel face serious problems...

4) The Cairo Agreement's Second Annex requires Israel to submit to the PNA water consumption figures for the settlements in Gaza prior to the transfer of power to the PNA. Furthermore, it requires Israel to submit meter readings for every single well in the Settlements on a periodic basis. This has not been implemented.

5) The same Annex requires Israel to deliver to the PNA a complete list of all the archaeological artifacts it had removed from Gaza and Jericho. It has failed so far to do so.

6) No progress has been made by Israel on continuing to deliver back to the PNA areas on the Beach of the Mawasi. No progress is made on the area of Jencho to be delivered to the PNA.

7) Four months have passed after the deadline of July 13 for the elections, redeployment in the West Bank, and deployment of the Palestinian Police. This is one of the most damaging aspects of the problems of the peace process.

8) Implementation of the Early Empowerment Agreement signed in August is not yet complete. Israel added a new requirement to the Agreement, which is availability of donor funding for the potential shortfall in tax collection in the West Bank. No such condition exists in the Agreement.

Any objective observer would note that Israel's failures to comply with terms of the peace process are greater in their severity than those alleged against the Palestinians. And yet, it remains only one of the ironies of the peace process that the burden of compliance falls exclusively on the Palestinians.

Jerusalem: an example

An example of the ironies that abound in this entire question of compliance can be seen in the U.S. and Israeli positions on Jerusalem.

Due to the terms of the Israeli-Palestinian Declaration of Principles (DOP), the sovereignty of Jerusalem is to be determined in final status negotiations between the two parties. U.S. policy towards the eastern portion of the city (occupied since 1967) has gone through a subtle but significant transformation.

U.S. policy has long considered the entire question of Jerusalem as unresolved (since this nation like every other does not place an embassy in that city), but the U.S. has consistently maintained that the eastern portion of the city, including the large swathes of land to its north, south and west, to be "occupied territory." Since the signing of the Israeli-Palestinian DOP and the recognition of Jerusalem as a "final status" issue, it is the Palestinians who have lost in both policy and practice.

Israel has continued its closure of the entirety of the expanded and self-declared "annexed" portions of Jerusalem. Palestinians from the West Bank are then regularly denied access to the medical, religious, social, cultural and educational institutions of the eastern part of the city. Jerusalem, which was a multi-faceted centre for West Bank Palestinian social life, has now become, in them, a no man's land.

The U.S. Congress and administration pay little attention to Israeli actions that are prejudice to the final status of Jerusalem. The closure and the expanded Jewish construction in the Palestinian areas around the city continue unabated. And while ignoring these Israeli actions, Congress has moved to forbid U.S. agencies or agents from dealing with Palestinian officials in Jerusalem — so as "not to prejudice the final status negotiations." Even OPIC loan guarantees are not applicable to any U.S.-Palestinian joint venture to invest capital in the eastern part of the city.

Members of Congress regularly join in Israeli expressions of outrage over PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat's comments on the Palestinian intention to see Jerusalem as the cultural capital of a Palestinian state. But they ignore the repeated claim by Israel that Jerusalem is the undivided capital of Israel. Prime Minister Rabin himself has on a number of occasions stated his belief that "Jerusalem" will remain united and under Israeli sovereignty.

And in this context, it is bizarre that no one understands how odd it was for 279 congressmen to sign a letter to President Clinton in October in which they claimed: "We remain unwavering in our belief that Jerusalem is Israel's capital — and only Israel's capital — and that it must remain a united city under Israeli sovereignty." The letter goes on to state "we support the action taken by the U.S. Congress to prohibit any new offices or meetings in Jerusalem to deal with the Palestinian Authority. Jerusalem is the capital of only one country, Israel, and we urge you to implement a policy that does not in any way support a Palestinian claim to the city."

And so the question must not be asked, who is in compliance and who is not and, in any case, can the U.S. (as driven as it by pro-Israel sentiment) act as an effective and neutral arbiter on this matter.

Why the Jews of the Arab countries left for Israel

By Pascal B. Karmy

IN my article "Palestinian Refugees — who's to blame," published in the Jordan Times on Dec. 18, 1994, I sought to counter the allegation made by Shimon Peres in his book titled: "The New Middle East" that some thousands of Palestinians left Palestine in 1948 because the Arab leaders of the neighbouring countries called upon them to leave the war zones with the baseless hope that they will return after the Arab states win the war. I showed that in fact the Palestinian refugees were either forced or threatened to leave or physically expelled from their towns and villages.

The second allegation made in Mr. Peres' book is that the Jews of the Arab countries were "expelled" from there and had to emigrate to Israel. This latter allegation is blatantly untrue.

The Jews of the Arab countries were in fact urged by Zionist propaganda to emigrate to Israel. The Zionists published false news about Jews being persecuted in the Arab World. In addition, it is now an incontrovertible fact that in the 1950s Zionists perpetrated several bomb explosions in the Jewish centres of Baghdad, Cairo, Damascus and Moroccan cities to frighten the Jews to flock to Israel. Thus Zionist propaganda coupled with clandestine terrorism against the Jews of the Arab countries have succeeded to drive thousands of them out and to Israel.

Indeed the Jews of the Arab countries were not subject to anti-Semitism or to persecution by their governments, nor fellow citizens. The Arabs and the Arab states have never, in their long history persecuted their law-abiding Jewish citizens. The stigma of real persecution is historically and typically Western. The persecution of the Jews reached its apex at the hands of the Nazis in Europe. No such similar persecution at all had occurred in the Arab countries. There are at present thousands of Jews living in the Arab countries, who despite American Jewish and Zionist propaganda and false news about their maltreatment were not deluded by this propaganda and are living in peace and harmony with their fellow citizens.

No pogroms occurred against the Jews in the history of the Arabs as that of Tsarist Russia or Nazi Germany. When for example Andalusia in Spain was under the rule of the Umayyad Arabs, the Jews shared in the reigns of government and attained a high level of culture and philosophy. In the year 1492, however, when King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella of Spain captured Granada, the last Arab stronghold in Spain, thousands of Arabs as well as Jews fled to

North Africa as they could not live under the despotie and fanatical Spanish rule of the time.

In his classic book "The Gun And The Olive Branch," David Hirst says: "Zionism had much less appeal to oriental Jews than it did to European Jews. In their vast majority, the oriental Jews were actually Arab Jews, and the reason for their difference was simply that, historically, they had not suffered anything like the persecution and discrimination of their brethren in European Christendom. Prejudice did exist but their lives were on the whole comfortable and their roots were deep. They were nowhere more at home than in Iraq."

"Thus anti-semitism was and still is used as double tool in the hands of political Zionists. It uses it abroad as a Damocles sword on the heads of those who criticise Israel while it manipulates it as a means to frighten the Jews to flock to Israel."

It is true that the revolt and the troubles caused by the Arabs in Palestine in 1930's and 1940's against British mandatory power for allowing unlimited Jewish immigration to Palestine had their effect on the Arabs everywhere and consequently the Arab Jews were treated with suspicion. In Iraq some Jews were killed. But this pogrom was the only one in Iraq history and took place at a time of political chaos when the revolt of Rashid Ali al Kaiwani was collapsing and most of his administration had taken flight as a British expeditionary force arrived in Baghdad. But there was no more such violence. By the end of 1948 there were 130,000 Jews in Iraq.

But the Zionists were still active in their midst and when the Zionists failed to convince the Jews of Iraq to emigrate to Israel they used bombs to frighten them to leave for Israel.

Furthermore, in order that Zionism may achieve the "ingathering" of Jews in Palestine, it encouraged anti-Semitism and even persecution of the Jews in the countries

in which they were living. Zionism has from the start considered the Jews as foreigners in those countries. Even Herzl, the father of Zionism, himself was quite conscious of the convergence of anti-Semitism with Zionism when he stated: "The anti-Semites are our most reliable friends and the anti-Semitic countries are our allies." Herzl saw the usefulness of anti-Semitism as an incentive to Jewish immigration to Palestine. Herzl's Diary which was published after his death in 1904 shows that in his contacts with and correspondence to prominent political leaders of his time, he was telling them that Jews were rebels and potential revolutionaries in the countries they were living in. In his contact with Tsarist Russia he asked Witte the Tzarist minister of finance to encourage the Jews to emigrate. Witte replied: "We encourage the Jews to emigrate by kicking them."

This anti-Semitism was and still is used as a double tool in the hands of political Zionists. It uses it abroad as a Damocles sword on the heads of those who criticise Israel while it manipulates it as a means to frighten the Jews to flock to Israel.

The well-known anti-Zionist Jewish writer Alfred Hirsch quoted in his book, "The Other Side of the Coin," what a Jewish columnist wrote in Davar newspaper in 1950 as follows: "I would send young men to the countries where Jews are absorbed in sinful self-satisfaction. The task of those young men would be to disgrace themselves as non-Jews, and plague Jews with anti-Semitic slogans such as 'bloody Jews,' 'Jews go to Palestine,' and similar intimacies I can vouch that the results in terms of a

Carbon monoxide kills 3

(Continued from page 1)

fire engulfed an educational centre in Misdar road, causing extensive damage but no injuries.

Capt. Share said investigations proved that the fire was caused by a kerosene heater.

"One of the employees we questioned said that while filling the heater it engulfed and the fire spread," he said.

It took firefighters one and a half hours to control and extinguish the fire at the Universal Cultural

Centre and prevent it from spreading, Capt. Share said.

Capt. Share could not give an estimate of the losses, but said that all the contents of the centre, including computers, typewriters, chairs and tables, were totally burnt.

It was the second fire involving shops in Amman in three days. On Dec. 24, an electric failure was believed to be the cause of a fire that destroyed a shoe store in Jabal Hussein. No casualties were reported in that blaze.

Yeltsin orders continued attack

(Continued from page 1)

He emphatically ruled out any question that the mainly-Muslim territory would be allowed to break away.

"The longer the situation in the Chechen Republic goes on, the greater the destructive effect on Russia's stability. It has become one of the main internal threats to our state's stability," Mr. Yeltsin said.

He also emphasised that "the way to a political settlement is still open."

In remarks directed at army soldiers, officers and interior ministry personnel, Mr. Yeltsin said: "A clear objective has been placed before you: disarm hand-in formations, get them to lay down or destroy their heavy weapons."

He said that armed "gangs" in Chechnya would be "firmly stopped."

"I ask you to make every effort to reach that goal and believe that you will," he said in his first speech since Russian troops were sent to Chechnya on Dec. 11.

"You were sent to Chechnya to protect the interests of the Russian state, the interests of all the peoples of our country. You are under the protection of the state, of the constitution of Russia and under the personal protection of the president."

Chechnya is "part and parcel of the Russian Federation."

"No territory has the right to secede," he said, referring to Chechnya's unilateral declaration of independence three years ago.

Mr. Yeltsin said the unchecked development of crime in Chechnya was threatening the entire country. "Your own family may (one day) fall victim" to it, he added.

Grozny was being sealed off and armed groups stopped, Mr. Yeltsin said, adding that Chechen borders were under control and "trafficking in arms, drugs and false money was stopped."

"Law and order will be restored on the territory of the republic of Chechnya," said Mr. Yeltsin, adding that Grozny "must be free of criminal elements as soon as possible."

Mr. Yeltsin said he shared Chechens' fears of a withdrawal of Russian troops before the republic's "many armed men" have been disarmed.

Mr. Yeltsin's spokesman said Vyacheslav Kostikov said

Mr. Yeltsin was primarily expressing support for the Russian military who were "carrying out their prime patriotic duty, which is not to allow the disintegration of Russia."

Mr. Kostikov said Mr. Yeltsin was aware of the fact that he found himself in "a very complicated situation."

Mr. Yeltsin was also "very concerned" before making his speech because of what Kostikov called "a certain misunderstanding of the situation in the mass media."

"Many people do not understand what is going on in the Chechenya, why we waited for so long, why Russian troops are acting this way," he said.

Mr. Yeltsin's speech will enable many Russians to understand the situation perfectly, Mr. Kostikov added.

Iran and Libya have called for a united Islamic stand to urge Russia to end its "massacre" in Chechenya, Tehran Radio said.

The call came in a telephone conversation between President Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani and Libyan leader Muammar Qadhafi late Monday.

The two leaders "deplored the killings in Chechenya, notably attacks on Grozny" and called for a peaceful resolution of the conflict as "the only reasonable way" to end the crisis.

They called for "a unified stand in the Islamic World to convince Russia to end the Chechen massacre," the radio said.

The Kremlin sent troops and tanks into Chechenya on Dec. 11 to dislodge forces loyal to separatist leader Dzhokhar Dudayev, who declared independence in October 1991.

"I call on you to do everything you can to fulfil this task and I believe you will do so," Mr. Yeltsin said Tuesday, directly addressing the armed forces. Armed bands who resisted would be crushed.

"Remember that the explosion of banditry on Chechen soil threatens our entire country. Your kin could be among its victims," he said.

"I want to assure all Russians — do not worry. Order and peace will be restored to Chechenya. We will take measures to avoid dragging out a solution of this complicated problem."

The Russian leader said Mr. Dudayev, a former Soviet air force general, was in power illegally and had launched an unprecedented crime wave against the rest of the country.

Algerian crisis deepens

(Continued from page 1)

ties were "deeply shocked and overwhelmed and condemned the odious crime with the utmost severity."

It reiterated an appeal to French nationals to leave Algeria and said the French embassy had told Algerian authorities of France's "most serious concern."

France has voiced irritation at the attitude of Algerian authorities during the hijacking. Algeria turned down a French offer of police help while the place stood on a runway at Algiers airport and only agreed to let the plane fly to France after Prime Minister Balladur, fearing a bloodbath, personally intervened with President Lamine Zeroual.

Foreign Minister Alain Juppé said after the hijacking ended that the bloody conflict between Muslim rebels and the Algerian government was likely to bring more violence against French interests.

France, basking in the success of its bold night raid, weighed urgent new steps to protect its nationals in Algeria.

Prime Minister Balladur called senior aides to an early-morning meeting to work out stricter security measures for French nationals in the strife-torn north African country.

Paris later said it would maintain a suspension of all

air and sea passenger transport to Algeria by French firms, announced on Monday, while deciding how to step up security.

Mr. Balladur visited some of the wounded, who were in four Marseille hospitals. Twenty-five people were hurt, none seriously, in the raid — three flight crew, 13 passengers and nine of the crack gendarmerie commandos.

One commando's fingers were blown off by a grenade, another was wounded in the chest and another fractured his thigh-bone, elbow and wrist as he leapt from the cockpit window.

The passengers killed in Algiers were a Vietnamese diplomat, Commercial Counsellor Bui Giang To at Hanoi's Algiers embassy, French embassy cook Yannick Beugnet and an Algerian policeman.

Algeria has been in turmoil since the government called off a 1992 general election that the fundamentalist Islamic Salvation Front (FIS) was poised to win. About 20,000 people have been killed in the ensuing three years of civil strife.

Millions in France held their breath as live television showed the hooded, black-clad commandos attack the cockpit, where the hijackers were holed up, with guns blazing.

Paris later said it would maintain a suspension of all

After the bullets, the tourist explosion

By Paul Mansfield

FROM THE air it's as if nothing has changed. The plane comes in low over Beirut at night, crossing a bowl of sparkling lights ringed by mountains on one side and the dark expanse of the Mediterranean on the other. In the airport terminal there are sleepy officials and a few soldiers with automatic weapons. Only the bullet holes in the corrugated iron fencing hint at the damage done by 17 years of civil war.

Tourists are slowly returning to Lebanon. This tiny country of three million people imploded on itself in the early seventies, turning the former commercial capital of the Middle East into a war zone. Christians fought with Muslims, each side spawning myriad warring factions. Other parties were drawn in — the Israelis, the PLO, the Syrians, the Americans, the French, the British, the U.N. — and most of them eventually withdrew licking their wounds.

By the late eighties Lebanon had become synonymous with car bombs, civilian massacres and hostages. Then, in 1992, with more than 100,000 people dead, a free election brought peace and the killing finally stopped. The infamous "militias" were disbanded and their members conscripted into the expanded Lebanese army.

Lebanon's new government has given itself 10 years in which to reconstruct the country. "Project 2002" is

already well under way and, astonishingly, it seems to be working.

Beirut, the former "Paris of the Middle East," bore the brunt of the war. What was once a palm-lined district of offices, shops and restaurants, is now a giant bomb-site. Ornate Ottoman facades are pockmarked with bullet holes. Buildings have been gutted by rocket and mortar fire. The wreckage goes on for block after block, a grotesque panorama of destruction. The bombed-out shell of the Holiday Inn still disfigures the Beirut skyline, a stark reminder of the bad old days.

But everywhere there are signs of recovery. New buildings are springing up, older ones being renovated or, more frequently razed to the ground and replaced. In the chic commercial district of Hamra I had breakfast of coffee and croissants at an open-air cafe and watched the parade of well-heeled shoppers in the streets. Designer goods are back in the stores: On the seafront battered old VW vans dispense ice cream to strollers on Corniche.

Up in the hills, in the fashionable suburbs of Broummana and Bett Meri, where rich Beirutis still maintain their weekend homes, first-class restaurants and hotels have reopened. And at the resort of Jounieh, 20-km to the north, the "strip" on Saturday night is a blaze of neon. Outside Beirut it seems the war never took place. I

Like many Lebanese, Ali exuded a curious mixture of confidence and uncertainty. How had he survived the war? "We tried to live normally. We went out. We met our friends. If something had

been going to happen, we

would usually hear about it a few days before." Even civil wars, it seems, have a grapevine.

Checkpoints aside, the major hazard of Lebanese roads is the traffic. Lebanese driving is creative, in the broadest sense. When one lane is blocked, create another. When that's blocked too, create a third even if it heads straight into the oncoming traffic. Drivers flog their beaten-up Mercedes and BMWs down the pitted roads at suicidal speed over 17 years of dodging bullets.

The road to Tyre passes through some of Lebanon's prettiest scenery, rich farmland dotted with orange and lemon groves, and scented by wild flowers. At Sidon we stopped at the magnificent Crusader castle, and wandered round the vaulted souk, a medieval labyrinth of damp stone alleyways, where old men sat outside cafés smoking nargileh bubbly-bubble pipes (£1 a lunging go) and drinking Arabic coffee flavoured with cardamom.

The only evidence of war was the army checkpoints; a cluster of old tyres in the road, a wooden guardhouse, a few machine-gun-toting soldiers peering cautiously into the car. Many checkpoints are manned by the Syrian army, whose continuing presence the Lebanese deeply resent. "They are stupid people," said Ali, our driver. "But then they're still in our country, so I guess that makes us stupid too."

Like many Lebanese, Ali exuded a curious mixture of confidence and uncertainty. How had he survived the war? "We tried to live normally. We went out. We met our friends. If something had

been going to happen, we

were

like lambs hajūn — a son of meat pizza — hummus, and tabbouleh salad laced with mint and parsley, and drank a bottle of red Ksara wine.

Baalbek, like the rest of Lebanon, is gearing up for a new tourist invasion: All the prices were listed in U.S. dollars.

In Tripoli, Lebanon's second-largest city, rows of money-changers sat outside their offices clutching wedges of banknotes. But even here, in the far north of the country, the war is never entirely absent. Down at the harbour wall the 15th-century Lion's Tower sits in the wreckage of a railway goods yard, alongside the derailed steam engines and bullet-riddled carriages of what was once the Tripoli-Beirut railway.

At Hasroun we stopped for a path through the crazed traffic out to the airport, passing the remains of the American Marine barracks and the streets where John McCarthy and other hostages disappeared into the underworld of the civil war for years. Outside the departure lounge — repository of early-seventies chic — only a handful of planes was parked on the tarmac. Beirut once handled 100 flights a day — and if Project 2002 is successful no doubt it will again.

I chatted to a student who had lost both parents in the fighting. Her experience of life was almost entirely bound up with war. "I'm young," she said. "I'm 21. But here (pointing to her heart) I'm old." However, she didn't look it. She looked animated and optimistic.

Daily Telegraph

Daughter's diary tells of Rasputin's glory

By Marianne Macdonald

An extraordinary unpublished diary by the teenage daughter of Rasputin, the legendary peasant with healing powers who was employed by the Russian tsarina to be sold at Sotheby's on Dec. 15.

The black exercise book, estimated to sell for up to £1,200, is a child's view of the momentous period of history shortly before the Russian imperial family was overthrown and murdered.

Rasputin began the diary in 1914 at the age of 15 and confided in its ruled pages the story of her rags-to-riches transition from the rural village of Pokrovskoe in Siberia to the capital, St Petersburg, after her father became a favourite of the tsar.

Rasputin had begun life as a Siberian peasant working the land, but his healing powers endeared him to the tsar, Nicholas II, and his wife, Alexandra, after they discovered that he alone could heal the bleeding of their haemophiliac son and heir, Alexis.

But because Alexis's illness was kept secret, Rasputin's role was misunderstood. Rumours sprang up that he was a German agent, a member of an orgiastic sect, the lover of the empress and her friend Anna Vyrubova, and the man who influenced political decisions. He became known as the "mad monk."

His presence at court was hated by the aristocrats, but he was a favourite of Alexandra and Anna, whom Rasputin had helped to walk again after a train crash in 1915. Such was the gossip about



Rasputin in the Siberian village of Pokrovskoe with his children. Maria, who began her dairy at 15, is at his right

him that after the February Revolution in 1917, Anna was questioned repeatedly

about their relationship before being found to be a virgin in a medical examination.

The propaganda against

Rasputin worked. But Maria's diary is written in the innocent language of a teenager unaware that in two years' time her father and the imperial family would be murdered.

"My biography: I was born in 1899 in the village of Pokrovskoe in the county of Tobolsk," she wrote.

"My parents are peasants, simple people. Our family consists of: father, mother, grandfather (my father's father), my brother, sister and myself."

"We all live happily together but sometimes I get cross with my brother and sister, but with my sister I get cross all the time. My father plays an important role because the Sovereign knows him and loves him."

Later entries describe how she played with the imperial children, Alexis and his four sisters, her school she was sent to and her crush on her tutor.

Rasputin was murdered in 1916, an act which was "the first explosion which heralded the coming collapse," according to John Stuart Sotheby's Russian expert.

In June 1918, Nicholas, Alexandra and their five children were murdered and Russia was plunged into anarchy.

Maria escaped to the West where she earned her living dancing in cabarets before moving to the United States, where she performed as a lion tamer in a circus.

She wrote a book defending her father and was last heard of living in California.

The Independent.

him that after the February Revolution in 1917, Anna was questioned repeatedly about their relationship before being found to be a virgin in a medical examination.

The propaganda against

The Independent.

tells them that there is "danger to hostages" if there are more than 70 passengers on board. The Air France Airbus had 170 people on board.

The rest is history. The assault itself took a little over seven minutes, with a fire-fight continuing at the front of the plane as the passengers disembarked.

Following a well-rehearsed plan, a small group of officers created a high-profile diversion at the front of the aircraft, storming the cockpit.

Throwing tear-gas grenades and pumping off automatic gunfire, the group succeeded in diverting the hijackers' attention while the second, larger force, gained access at the rear of the aircraft, storming the cockpit.

This second group was charged with ordering all the passengers to get down on the ground, and then operating the aircraft's emergency chutes which allow them to slide to safety in case of emergency.

This was the particularly risky part of the operation from a casualty point of view.

The training manual for the Groupe d'Intervention de la Gendarmerie Nationale

PARIS (AFP) — The successful storming Monday by elite French para-military police of an Airbus hijacked by Islamic militants, recalled past attacks on hijacked planes

U.S. looks to Asia and Latin America in new economic order

WASHINGTON (AFP) — The United States struggled to stay ahead of the pack in 1994 and into the new century by promoting multilateral and regional ties as a buffer to the growing economic might of Europe and Asia.

The keystone of U.S. policy aimed at liberalising world trade was when the representatives of 124 countries gathered in Geneva at the start of the year to end years of difficult talks by signing the Uruguay Round in the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT).

That landmark agreement opened up hitherto protected sectors such as services and agriculture, slashed tariffs by 38 per cent and will engender \$200 billion in additional trade worldwide over the next ten years.

On the regional level, the United States was active on two fronts — Asia and the Americas.

The North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) grouping the United States, Canada and Mexico was born in January and in December

at the Summit of Americas in Miami, 34 countries pledged to establish a free trade zone by 2005 stretching from Alaska to Argentina.

The U.S. administration was also a motivating force in the summit of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) forum in Jakarta when 18 countries including powerhouses Japan and China agreed to set up a free trade zone in the region by 2020.

With 800 million inhabitants, the Americas account for 29 per cent (\$6.8 trillion) of global industrial production and 17 per cent (\$1.2 trillion) of world trade.

The APEC countries with 2.08 billion inhabitants account for 52 per cent (\$12.2 trillion) of world industrial production and 41 per cent (\$3.1 trillion) of world trade.

This new-found U.S. faith over the last few years in the merits of regionalism reflects the U.S. economy's difficulties in maintaining its leading edge in the world economic system, said Jagdish Bhagwati, an economics professor at

Columbia University.

In the three decades that followed the end of World War II, the United States reigned supreme over the world economy, accounting for 50 per cent of industrial production and with healthy trade surpluses.

The current situation is a pale shadow, with U.S. industrial production cut back to 25 per cent of the whole and with chronically bad trade deficits, notably with Japan and China.

At the same time, the economic and social integration of western Europe has spawned a giant rival which currently accounts for 40 per cent of world trade and 28 per cent of industrial production.

The specter of "Fortress Europe" has convinced the United States that it needs to foster its own free trade zones with its own geographic peers.

The end of the Cold War and the dissolution of the Soviet Union also removed a key binding factor in trans-Atlantic ties of the last 50 years.

The same historic developments left an imprint in the Pacific where countries like Japan, reliant on U.S. mili-

tary muscle, are now less inclined to bend to pressures from Washington to open their domestic market.

The Clinton administration has made it clear that its priority in Asia is to finally slash its stubborn bilateral trade deficit with Japan, which topped \$60 billion in 1993.

These are the barriers forcing the United States to look elsewhere in Asia and in the Americas to redress the situation.

"We are not abandoning our efforts with Japan because we can't allow the world's second-largest economy to have sanctuary markets," said U.S. Trade Representative Mickey Kantor.

"But when we look at the numbers we saw where the action is and it's in our own hemisphere and in Asia outside of Japan," he said.

U.S. exports to Japan are forecast to increase by 70 per cent to \$88 billion by 2010, but for the rest of Asia the increase will be much bigger at 163 per cent to \$248 billion.

For Latin America, the growth of U.S. exports will be similarly explosive and are forecast to reach \$232 billion in the same period.

Health service would be increased by \$900 million to \$7.5 billion.

The government subsidies mainly cooking oil, flour, wheat and medicine.

The press here has noted price rises over the past two weeks which Dr. Sedki blamed on fluctuations on the world markets.

He also said that the government would not sell off any state firms lower than their estimated value. "We are not obliged to sell at a loss," he said.

The International Monetary Fund has criticised the slow pace of Egyptian economic reforms, particularly in its privatisation programme.

The IMF wants Egypt to halve subsidies and devalue the pound.

The budget for social and

Egypt keeps subsidies to avoid 'upheaval'

CAIRO (AFP) — Prime Minister Atif Sedki announced Tuesday that state subsidies on the necessities would be maintained to avoid any social unrest.

Dr. Sedki told Tuesday's edition of the evening Al Massa newspaper that the government would "continue to fix the price of bread and allocate subsidies to all the necessary social services to avoid social upheaval."

The government will allocate around \$1.3 billion in the 1995/96 budget to subsidise staple foods, Planning Minister Kamal Al Ganzuri said.

"The poorest classes will have nothing extra to pay next year, that's one of the main objectives of the 1995/96 budget," he said.

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health service would be increased by \$900 million to \$7.5 billion.

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The budget for social and

Israel to lift all customs duties on imports from U.S. at beginning of 1995

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (R) — Israel will remove all customs duties on imports from the United States on Jan. 1, when the final stage of the Israeli-U.S. free trade area agreement takes effect, the treasury announced Tuesday.

The agreement, signed in 1985, established three lists of goods. Israel immediately removed customs on the less sensitive imports, which made up the first list.

Israel has a free trade area agreement with the European Community but it does not include fruits and vegetables.

Israel is negotiating a free trade agreement with Canada.

This list includes refrigerators, which carry a 14 per cent customs tax; air conditioning units, taxed at 10.5 per cent; footware 16-22 per cent; telephones 18 per cent; cellular and cordless phones 12.7 per cent; textiles up to three per cent, and fresh fruits and vegetables 14 per cent.

In February last year the government floated the shilling currency and abolished exchange controls only to change its mind six months later. Donor pressure forced them back to reforms.

In September, Kenya lifted a ban on imports of maize and wheat which had been imposed less than a month earlier to protect local industries.

The donor concerns were supported by two leading critics of the government who are also members of the opposition Ford-Kenya Party, lawyer Paul Muite and economist Robert Shaw.

Mr. Shaw told Reuters:

"Both (referrals at the stock exchange and private bureaux) are positive steps. It is a logical progression," a Western ambassador told

Reuters.

"But donors and investors would like to see consistency and a sound track record which this country hardly needs but desperately lacks presently," the diplomat added.

Another ambassador of a donor country echoed these views saying, "this country has earned itself a lot of mistrust. So our reaction is let's wait and see whether these are long-term measures here to stay or more pieces to appear us."

The diplomats were referring to previous policy U-turns.

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business daily beat

A review
of economic news
from the Arabic press

Steep prices prompt people to tighten belts

★ In his statement to the Lower House of Parliament, Supply Minister Adel Qudah admitted the fact that the cost of living went up by 5.4 per cent and that prices of food-stuffs have shot up by 13.7 per cent. Foodstuffs, including grain and by-products, poultry, meat, fish, dairy products, eggs, oil and ghee, fruits, vegetables, dry and canned legumes, oils, sugar and its by-products, tea, coffee and other products, have become so expensive that purchasing them increasingly lowers the living standard of households. A supermarket owner said he knew many consumers who are cutting on their purchases. Another retailer noted that people were tightening their belts and that himself, for one, could not afford to have a diversity of food despite his dealing in foodstuffs. "If I am to enjoy three good meals a day, that will cost at least JD 10 if not more for a family," he explained, adding that was impossible because there were other expenses like rent, clothing...etc.

Other merchants point out that demand is high for lentils and other legumes which are still the cheapest. A confectionary manufacturer says his sales are down by more than 50 per cent, noting that his product is of least concern to the public amid the soaring prices for basic food. A housewife says her husband is a government employee and that his salary is barely enough for 10 days after paying JD 70 for rent.

A buyer at the Al Wihdat vegetable market says 95 per cent of the people cannot afford to buy their needs of vegetables because prices are extremely high. "Without having to pay rent, we are forced to cut our purchases by half...I don't know how the people who have to pay rent could manage to live," he said.

A vegetable trader said that much produce rots because nobody buys at high prices. "Can you imagine that people are now asking for lemons we used to throw away." (Al Ra'i)

★ The Civil Consumer Corporation (CCC) will close its stores throughout the country for five days starting Wednesday, Dec. 28, 1994 for end-of-year stock taking. The store's markets will reopen on Jan. 2, 1995 (Al Dusour).

★ Since Thursday is a religious holiday, the Ministry of Finance will open all its offices around the Kingdom on Friday, Dec. 30, 1994 to receive property tax from the public. Failing to pay the tax (Al Musaqafat) by Saturday, the last day of this year, a fine that goes up to 50 per cent of the tax amount will be imposed (Al Dusour).

★ A court which is looking into a case of whether restaurants and patisseries should be categorised as industrial sector or service sector has sent an inquiry to the Ministry of Industry and Trade asking for its view. The court also sent an inquiry to the Amman Chamber of Industry to make sure whether restaurants and patisseries are included in its records. The Department of Customs has been after these businesses since the beginning of June to have them pay sales tax and more than 10 warnings, some carrying as high as JD 16,000 in penalty, were issued until the end of September. There are around 200 patisseries in Amman alone and the same number in both Zarqa and Irbid.

★ According to Amman Financial Market (AFM) Director-General Umayyah Touqan, one of the main reasons for the stock market retreat is the rigidity with which the liquidity policy had been applied in the market (Al Aswaq).

AMMAN FINANCIAL MARKET HOSTING BANK CENTER - AMMAN - SEMEISIAN TELEPHONE: 660170 / 663270

ORGANIZED MARKET SHARE PRICE LIST		FOR TUESDAY	27/12/1994
COMPANY'S NAME	NO. OF SHARES TRADED	VALUED TRADE	PREV. CLOSING PRICE
JORDAN BANK	180	33805	182,500 182,350
JORDAN NATIONAL BANK	19675	85976	4,360 4,350
BANK OF JORDAN	100	7450	5,600 5,600
THE SOARING BANK	1200	6740	5,600 5,650
JORDAN KUWAIT BANK	3500	7475	3,990 3,990
JORDAN JORDAN INVESTMENT BANK	800	3342	3,700 3,560
JORDAN LEVANT BANK	3350	11967	3,650 3,700
BUSINESS BANK	200	3405	3,480 3,400
BEST KUWAIT SAVING & INVESTMENT FOR HOUSING	1500	1545	3,200 3,200
AMMAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT	119071	181453	1,510 1,510
PHILADELPHIA INVESTMENT BANK	4650	7831	1,680 1,700
S R A N K S S E C T O R	152326	340610	INDEX NUMBER: 157.94 CHANGE : +0.03%
JERUSALEM INSURANCE	300	840	4,310 4,300
AL-SHAH AL-ARABI INSURANCE	350	1680	4,750 4,800
I N S U R A N C E S E C T O R	550	3520	INDEX NUMBER: 138.43 CHANGE : +0.02%
JORDANIAN ELECTRIC POWER / NEW	12580	19178	1,530 1,530
JORDAN ELECTRIC POWER / NEW	1500	2210	1,530 1,530
JORDAN IRON & MINERAL	1700	3706	2,080 2,130
ARAB INTERNATIONAL HOTELS	450	2185	4,800 4,900
JORDAN NATIONAL SHIPPING LINES	3900	12385	3,140 3,150
JORDAN PETROLEUM SECURITIES	1800	4309	2,390 3,390
JORDAN GULF PETROLEUM	24300	39015	1,190 1,210
JORDAN PRESS FOUNDATION / ALRAA'	3000	3185	1,200 1,200
UNITED MIDDLE EAST & COSCOORE HOTELS	16450	29488	3,190 3,110
ARAB INTER. FOR INVESTMENT & EDUCATION	750	3625	3,500 3,500
JORDANIAN EXPATRIATES INVESTMENT HOLDING	500	705	1,380 1,430
S E R V I C E S S E C T O R	66715	150733	INDEX NUMBER: 132.15 CHANGE : +0.63%
ATTACHEE CONST. MATERIAL MANUFACTURING	3500	3120	1,280 1,340
THE JORDAN CEMENT FACTORIES	3483	9991	2,670 2,670
JOHNSON PAPER INDUSTRY	1000	4585	2,580 2,580
THE JORDAN WORSTED MILLS	10100	7080	2,750 2,800
ARAB PHARMACEUTICAL MANUFACTURING	12950	66670	5,110 5,120
ARAB CHEMICAL INDUSTRIES	750	4650	6,100 6,300
RAPTA DEVELOPMENT & INVESTMENT	300	4800	15,600 16,000
ARAB AL DANIA DEVELOPMENT & INTERNATIONAL TRADE	1400	3817	3,690 3,730
ARAB AL DANIA DEVELOPMENT & INTERNATIONAL TRADE	20450	336373	16,200 16,240
ARAB AL-MILIMUN INDUSTRY	400	3700	1,750 1,750
LIVESTOCK & POULTRY	750	5136	6,850 6,850
ARAB PAPER CONVERTING & TRADING	27750	25708	8,930 8,930
NATIONAL STEEL INDUSTRY	9400	13034	1,360 1,370
INTERNAKAR PETRO-CHEMICAL INDUSTRIES	5000	30750	4,150 4,150
JORDAN POLYTHENE INDUSTRIES	9400	36730	2,870 2,830
ALRADIN INDUSTRIES	450	6560	1,350 1,350
JORDAN INDUSTRIES & MATCH/TIMCO	700	1891	4,120 4,120
NATIONAL CABLE & WIRE MANUFACTURING	3050	2556	8,830 8,840
JORDAN SULFO-CHEMICALS	12500	66250	5,450 5,300
ARAB CENTER FOR PHARM. & CHEMICALS	350	690	1,990 1,970
ARABIC INVESTMENT	500	1390	3,760 3,780
UNIVERSAL MODELS INDUSTRIES	600	1050	1,780 1,780
UNIVERSAL MODELS INDUSTRIES	3400	9984	4,150 4,150
I N D U S T R I A L S E C T O R	149411	741073	INDEX NUMBER: 127.50 CHANGE : +0.30%
G R A N D T O T A L	368002	1234925	INDEX NUMBER: 143.49 CHANGE : +0.17%
NO. OF TRADED SHARES IN PARALLEL MARKET	135380		
VALUE TRADED IN PARALLEL MARKET	180161		

Financial Markets
in co-operation with
Cairo Amman Bank

U.S. Dollar for International Markets

Currency	New York Close	Tokyo Close
Sterling Pound	1,5443	1,5455*
Deutsche Mark	1,5793	1,5800
Swiss Franc	1,3329	1,3360*
French Franc	5,4525	5,4480*
Japanese Yen	100.12	100.41
European Currency Unit	1,2050	1,2058*

* 1000 per 1000
** Opening on 24/12/1994

Datas: 27/12/1994

Previous Month	Datas: 27/12/1994*				
Metal	USD/Oz JD/Gm*	Metal	USD/Oz JD/Gm		
Gold	361.75	7.50	Silver	4.74	0.110

General Bank of Jordan Exchange Rate Bulletin

Datas: 27/12/1994

Currency	BD	Offr		
U.S. Dollar	0.7630	0.7650		
Sterling Pound	1.0829	1.0843		
Deutsche Mark	0.4444	0.4466		
Swiss Franc	0.5265	0.5291		
French Franc	3.75	4.00	4.18	4.50
Japanese Yen	2.04	2.12	2.18	2.43
European Currency Unit	6.00	6.25	6.50	6.93

International Gold rates for members, including U.S. Dollars, 1000 per 1000

Datas: 27/12/1994

Currency	BD	Offr
Rahrah Dinar	1,1490	1,1620
Lebanese Lira	0,641330	0,642640
Small Riyal	0,1860	0,1880
Kuwaiti Dinar	2,3000	2,3600
Qatari Riyal	0,1919	0,1932
Egyptian Pound	0,2000	0,2150
Oman Riyal	1,8070	1,8768
UAE Dirham	0,1904	0,1917
Greek Drachma	0,2830	0,2832
Cypriot Pound	1,4050	1,5315

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Jordan Handball Championship

Ahli overcome Arabi; Orthodoxi lose again

By Roufan Nahas

Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Al Ahli kept the lead after beating Al Arabi 31/21 Monday at the Sports Palace after the 11th week of the Kingdom's Handball Championship.

Al Ahli/Al Arabi Al Ahli played with confidence to keep the lead with 20 points after an exciting match with Al Arabi who withdrew in the 20 minute of the second half.

Al Ahli kept a tight defense to stop Al Arabi's Ibrahim Bnhairi and Mousa Fateh Allah from scoring. Meanwhile Al Ahli scored successfully depending on Hussein to

Ahmad and Issa Abdullah to lead the attacks and end the first half with 17/15 win.

The second half witnessed Al Arabi's withdrawal whose attack were blocked by Al Ahli's solid defense who kept the pressure to end the match 31/21.

Al Arabi stayed in the second place with 18 points.

Al Salt/Amman: Meanwhile in another match Al Salt beat Amman 29/20 to stay in the third place with 10 points.

Al Salt's Jihad Quishat successfully marched through Amman's defense opening the way to his colleagues Imad Tadros and Mohammad Al Hindawi to

score and end the first half 13/9.

Amman tried in vain to pass through Al Salt's strong defense while Al Salt were free to continue scoring to end the match with 29/20 win.

Yarmouk Shouneh/

Standings after 11th week

	P	W	D	L	GF	GA	Pm.
Ahli	11	10	—	1	380	258	28
Arabi	10	9	—	1	302	258	15
Salt	10	5	—	5	296	295	10
Hussein	10	3	1	6	262	283	7
Y. Shouneh	10	3	1	6	297	331	7
Amman	9	3	—	6	219	250	6
Orthodoxi	10	1	—	9	261	336	2

* Amman and Arabi have a postponed match.

SPORTS IN BRIEF

NSW Open organisers aim for Hingis

SYDNEY (AFP) — New South Wales Open organisers are delaying naming Jennifer Capriati as a wildcard for next month's tournament in the hope of getting Swiss teenager Martina Hingis into the main draw. The Sydney tournament, from January 9, is set to bring together for the first time 14-year-old Hingis with Capriati, the fallen teenage star in the second event of her comeback. Tournament director Barry Masters is keen to have both players in the draw despite having only one wildcard left after giving the other to Australia's Nicolo Bradic, the former Provis. As it stands Masters will give the free pass to Capriati, who collected her last tournament title here in 1993 before personal troubles persuaded her to give up. Hingis will travel with her schoolbooks and mother Melanie, a former ranked Czech player who named her after Martina Navratilova.

New York Ranger maced

NEW YORK (R) — Russian hockey star Sergei Zubov of the New York Rangers was walking with his wife and child near their home in Brooklyn when he was sprayed with mace tear gas. New York City Police said early Tuesday, Zubov, the leading scorer last season for the National Hockey League champion Rangers, was walking in the Brighton beach section of Brooklyn with his wife and daughter, who was in a carriage, when he got into a confrontation with several teenagers, police said. When one of the teenagers bumped into the carriage, Zubov, a six-foot-one, 200-pound (1.85 metres, 90 kg) 24-year-old from Moscow, told them to be careful, "whereupon one of the teenagers, Gilbert Rosario, turned around and sprayed him with mace," said police spokesman James Coleman.

Roberts set to face Manchester United

LONDON (R) — Welsh international striker Iwan Roberts is set to make his first start for Leicester under new manager Mark McGhee against United at Old Trafford Wednesday night. Roberts came on as a late substitute and scored in the 2-1 defeat by Liverpool Monday after shaking off an attack of sciatica. McGhee tried and failed to sign Roberts two years ago when he was manager at Reading.

Kin of boy died after baseball drills win suit

TOKYO (R) — A Japanese court awarded 48.7 million yen (\$480,000) in damages Tuesday to the parents of a high school baseball player who collapsed during a grueling practice session and later died of heart failure. Tsuchiura Nihon University high school and the school's then-baseball coach were ordered to compensate the parents of Hiroyuki Saito after the local court concluded there was a link between his October 1988 death and the practice session. Saito, aged 16, collapsed during repeated 200-metre sprints. He was

taken to hospital hut died of heart failure. The school, 70 km (42 miles) northeast of Tokyo, boasts one of its region's strongest baseball teams.

Salinas could miss Real Madrid clash

MADRID (R) — Spanish international striker Julie Salinas could be out of action for a month after injuring his right calf in a friendly between a Basque selection and Russia. The Deportivo Coruna star, a scorer in Spain's recent 4-1 victory over Belgium, now looks likely to miss the club's vital home clash with league leaders Real Madrid January 14. But he has not given up hope of playing. "At least my injury has come over the Christmas break," said the former Barcelona player. "I'm just hoping I'll be back in time for the visit of Madrid."

Lack of snow hits Crans Montana race

GENEVA (R) — Poor snow conditions continued to disrupt the Alpine Skiing World Cup calendar as organisers were forced Tuesday to postpone a men's downhill race set for the Swiss resort of Crans Montana January 6. An International Ski Federation official said efforts were being made to switch it and other postponed races elsewhere, but unseasonal weather in Europe was making it very difficult. But snow conditions had improved enough for a men's giant slalom to go ahead in the Slovenian resort of Kranjska Gora January 6. It was previously scheduled for December 22.

Former England captain May dies

LONDON (AFP) — Former England captain Peter May, widely-regarded as his country's finest post-war batsman, died peacefully at home Tuesday after a short illness, four days before his 65th birthday. May played 66 Tests for England from 1951-61 and scored 4,537 runs at an average of 46.77 with a grace that made him one of the most attractive batsmen of his generation. He was also England's greatest captain but surprised many of his contemporaries by retiring from Test cricket at the early age of 31 and from the first-class game two years later. May continued to serve English cricket in a number of important capacities — as a selector and later as chairman of selectors, as president of MCC in 1980-81 and as an active member of the Surrey committee. British Prime Minister John Major, a lifelong follower of cricket and member of Surrey cricket club, said: "Peter May was one of the greatest batsmen English cricket has ever produced. He played cricket and life in a way few people could match. "He will leave behind a legacy of personal and cricketing memories that many will treasure," he added. Test debut in 1951, against South Africa at his 13 test hundreds. His highest score was the 285 not out he made against the West Indies at Edgbaston in 1957. May captained England for a record 41 Tests, winning 20 and losing only 10. In his first-class career, from 1948-63, he totalled 27,592 runs at an average of 51.00 — a tally including 85 centuries.

Paris-Dakar Rally to set off

PARIS (AFP) — Hinbert Autio, who won the Paris-Dakar rally in 1992 when it finished in Cape Town, will flag off drivers in the 1995 race from the foot of the Eiffel Tower.

However, for the second year running the first competitive stage is raced at Grenada in Spain January 1. The rally sets sail for Africa from Spain to miss Algeria because of the terrorist trouble there.

Autio, now race director, won the rally twice on a motorbike before breaking both ankles in 1987 and switching to cars.

He has planned a 10,066km drive through five countries. The 14 timed stages on uncharted routes make up 6,169km and a speed limit has been imposed for driving through villages.

A satellite-linked computer the size of a shoebox on every car and motorbike will ensure no-one can do a Mark Thatcher. The son of the former British premier gained the rally international attention when he got lost in the Sahara 10 years ago.

GOREN BRIDGE

WITH OMAR SHARIF & TANAH HIRSCH
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A PESSIMIST'S PARADISE

East-West vulnerable. South deals.

NORTH ♠ E 8 2

♦ J 5

♥ 8 5 3 2

♣ 5 4 3 2

WEST ♠ A Q 10 9 5 4 3 ♦ J 7 6

♥ 2

♣ 2

♦ A 8 7 6

♦ A 10 9

SOUTH ♠ Void

♦ Q 8 7 6

♦ Q A K J 10 9 6

♦ Q J

The bidding:

South West North East

1 NT Pass Pass

4 ♠ Pass 3 ♠ Pass

Pass Pass

Opening lead: Six of ♦

Since nine tricks at no trump or 10 in a major suit score as much or more than 11 tricks in a minor, clubs and diamonds are all but forgotten in duplicate bridge for game purposes. Passes to or from the minors are still bid, but the feeling is you might as well bid a slam in a minor rather than settle for a pedantic game.

That is not always correct. When this hand was dealt in a major national championship, those pairs who tried for a minor (the vast majority) did with their partners what the minors are still bid, but the feeling is you might as well bid a slam in a minor rather than settle for a pedantic game.

Those declarers who view life through racy spectacles wanted to lay them down. They drew two rounds of trumps, then cashed on hearts. When West showed out in the second heart, two of declarer's losing hearts could be ruffed on the table, but declarer was still saddled with a heart loser.

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Vikings end 49ers' winning streak to take NFC Central title

MINNEAPOLIS (R) — The Minnesota Vikings, with more at stake but without their top quarterback, won the NFC Central division title with a 21-14 victory over the league-leading San Francisco 49ers Monday night.

Dewayne Washington returned a fumble 18 yards for a touchdown and Fuad Reveiz kicked two field goals as the Vikings (10-6), who rested injured quarterback Warren Moon, won their second division title in three years. They will host the Chicago Bears in a wild-card-round playoff game Sunday.

Sean Salisbury, who had not taken a snap this season, started in place of Moon.

The 49ers (13-3), who had already clinched the NFC West and home field advantage throughout the entire playoffs, saw their 10-game winning streak come to an end.

San Francisco benched starting quarterback Steve Young and receivers Jerry Rice and John Taylor early in the second quarter and lost for the first time since October 2, against Philadelphia.

"I think it was the longest quarter of my coaching experience, the way Steve was taking those shots," San Francisco coach George Seifert said.

"I hate games like this," said Rice. "I felt I was getting into a groove and then I sat down."

Salisbury completed 16-of-34 passes for 156 yards. His 38-yard pass to Qadry Ismail set up a one-yard touchdown run by Terry Allen that gave Minnesota a 21-7 lead with nine seconds left in the third quarter.

"I'm just grateful I got a chance, and guys stuck with me," Salisbury said.

"Sean Salisbury did a solid job," Green said. "I think any time you go out and do your job as a backup quarterback, it's to operate the offense, get the team in the end zone, any chance you can, try to win the ballgame. It was his first opportunity this year and he did a good job."

Washington picked up a fumble by Ricky Watters and scooted 17 yards for a touchdown with 10:07 left in the first quarter to give Minnesota a 7-0 lead.

"I just happened to be in the right place at the right time," said Washington, who tied the rookie record for touchdowns by a defensive player with three. "I'm glad things worked out for me."

Revez kicked field goals of 48 and 27 yards, extending his streak of consecutive field goals to 28, one behind the record set by John Carney of the San Diego Chargers in 1993.

Revez kicked field goals of 48 and 27 yards, extending his streak of consecutive field goals to 28, one behind the record set by John Carney of the San Diego Chargers in 1993.

Young completed 12-of-13 passes for 84 yards, including a six-yard touchdown toss to Rice on the first play of the second quarter that tied it, 7-7.

It was the 139th career touchdown for Rice, who caught four passes for 33 yards to move one past Steve Largent into second place on the all-time receptions list with 820. Art Monk of the New York Jets is the all-time leader with 934.

Revez kicked a 48-yard field goal on the final play of the first half to give Minnesota the lead for good at 10-7. He added a 27-yarder midway through the third period to boost the lead to 13-7.

Revez tied Chuck Foreman's 1975 club record for points in a season with 132.

Minnesota receiver Kris Carter caught three passes for 24 yards, extending his NFL single-season receptions record to 132.

Allen ran for the two-point conversion after his touchdown to give the Vikings a 14-point lead.

Elvis Grbac, who replaced Young in the second quarter, threw a one-yard touchdown pass to Ed McCaffrey with 3:53 remaining. Grbac was 18-of-23 for 184 yards and one interception.

Green was optimistic Moon would be ready next week.

"We're hopeful that the progress Warren Moon has made last week, he'll make the same kind of progress this week," Green said. "If he does, there is a good chance he will be able to play Sunday."

Asked if he would be ready should moon still be sidelined, Salisbury said: "Have to. If he plays it's just a feather in our cap, because

he had such a wonderful year. If he isn't, I have the responsibility to my teammates and myself to be ready for it."

Eagles fire head coach

The Philadelphia Eagles fired Rich Kotite as head coach Monday.

No successor was named, but Dick Vermeil, the only coach to take the Eagles to the Super Bowl, has been reported to be considering returning to the team he quit 12 years ago due to "burnout."

Eagles owner Jeffrey Lurie met with Kotite Monday morning and then said they mutually decided to part ways.

"Rich Kotite and the Philadelphia Eagles have decided to part company," Lurie said at a news conference at Veterans Stadium.

"Rich Kotite will no longer be the head coach of the Philadelphia Eagles. All aspects of his contract will be honored. He is free to pursue head coaching opportunities."

Kotite has been mentioned as a candidate for the head coaching job with the expansion Carolina Panthers.

"Coaches are hired to be fired," said Kotite, who had a year left on his contract. "I

don't know if I agree with that but I have the warmest feelings for everybody in this organization."

Kotite has been under fire since the middle of the season, even when the Eagles were 7-2 and contending for first place in the NFC East.

The Eagles skidded down the stretch, losing their last seven games to fall out of the playoff picture at 7-9.

The Philadelphia Inquirer reported Sunday that Vermeil is considering an offer from Lurie to serve as the team's general manager or general manager and coach.

According to the Inquirer, the 58-year-old Vermeil met for three hours with Lurie Friday.

"I went into the meeting without an interest, and I came out of the meeting with an interest," Vermeil told the newspaper. "We discussed the possibilities of general manager or general manager and coach."

Vermeil, who coached the Eagles from 1976 through 1982, said he and Lurie agreed to consider the offer for a week or two before making a decision.

Vermeil, college football analyst for ABC Sports, compiled a 54-47 record with the Eagles and guided the team to Super Bowl 15, where they were beaten by the Oakland Raiders 27-10.

NFL Standings

American Football Conference

Eastern Division

	W	L	T	PF	PA
Miami(Y)	10	6	0	389	327
New England (X)	10	6	0	351	312
Indianapolis	8	8	0	307	320
Buffalo	7	9	0	340	356
NY Jets	6	10	0	264	320

Central Division

	W	L	T	PF	PA
Pittsburgh(Y)	12	4	0	316	234
Cleveland (X)	11	5	0	340	204
Cincinnati	3	13	0	276	406
Houston	2	14	0	226	352

Western Division

	W	L	T	PF	PA
San Diego(Y)	11	5	0	381	306
Kansas City(X)	9	7	0	319	298
La Raiders	9	7	0	303	327
Denver	7	9	0	347	396
Seattle	6	10	0	287	323

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Manchester United's Eric Cantona (centre) tries to keep control of the ball as he is blocked by two defenders (AFP photo)

Blackburn end United's shortlived joy

LONDON (AFP) — Blackburn Rovers made a quick return to the top of the English Premiership Monday night with a 3-1 win at Manchester City after reigning champions Manchester United had led the table for just seven hours following a 3-2 victory at Chelsea earlier in the day.

Rovers, without manager Kenny Dalglish who is recovering from an appendix operation, took the lead early in a frenetic first half through Alan Shearer's 20th goal of the season.

Mark Atkins put them further front before Niall Quinn reduced the deficit with a trademark header after just 20 minutes.

But any hope of a City fightback were killed off midway through a dull second-half when England full-back Graham Le Saux curled a brilliant free-kick from 25 yards over the defensive wall and beyond the helpless reach of Andy Dibble.

Manebeister United, beaten twice in the league by Glenn Hoddle's side last sea-

son, appeared to be cruising to a comfortable victory at Stamford Bridge after a Mark Hughes goal and an Eric Cantona penalty had put them in front.

But a penalty by Scottish international John Spencer and Eddie Newton's first goal for two years 12 minutes from time set up the possibility of a thrilling reversal. But only

for a minute.

While Chelsea were still celebrating their remarkable comeback, Irish international Roy Keane broke free on the left and set up Brian McClair who swept in his first league goal for 14 weeks.

Chelsea, though, refused to accept defeat and only a superb save from Gary Walb

minus from the end from substitute Mark Stein kept United in front.

United manager Alex Ferguson was clearly relieved that his side emerged from Chelsea's second-half assault with all three points.

"It nearly turned into a disaster, which I couldn't envisage at 2-0 up. In the first half, we were superb, and

maybe getting the penalty so early in the second half caused us to relax and get careless," he said.

As speculation mounts about his possible transfer to Nottingham Forest in exchange for the younger Stan Collymore, Mark Hughes posted a timely reminder of his value to United.

The veteran Welshman, whose age and nationality may make him surplus to Alex Ferguson's requirements in rebuilding a side capable of challenging for European honours, opened the scoring with a typically bullish effort.

With perfect timing he slid into the box to meet Ryan Giggs' lofted cross for his first league goal in two months and only his fourth of the season.

Cantona stretched United's lead seconds after the break after Keane was crudely challenged by Frank Sinclair before Gary Pallister's equally bovine treatment of Stein allowed Spencer to blast home from the penalty spot.

Newton's far-post header looked to have sealed a superb fightback by the Londoners before the efforts of Keane and McClair ensured that Chelsea's joy was only short-lived.

Liverpool goalkeeper

David James saved a penalty and pulled off a superb injury-time save to help the Merseysiders to a 2-1 victory at lowly Leicester.

James saved Steve Thompson's 63rd minute spotkick, after John Barnes had tripped Lee Philpot inside the box, and then only seconds from the final whistle spread himself to keep out a point-blank effort from Mark Blake.

Four minutes later Liverpool took the lead through a Robbie Fowler penalty, after John Scales was pushed inside the box.

The Merseysiders extended their lead to 77 minutes, when Fowler and Barnes combined for Ian Rush to prod home at the near post.

Leicester were reduced to ten men towards the end when Simon Grayson was sent off for his second booking in a game that they should have won by a far greater margin.

Nick Barmby set Spurs on their way after 11 minutes when he swept home Darren Audett's cross from 10 yards and though the Londoners dominated throughout they failed to make the best of their chances until Teddy Sheringham struck two minutes from time.

Republic of Ireland skipper Andy Townsend suffered a miserable return from a six-game suspension when he was sent off after an hour's play in Aston Villa's 0-0 draw with Arsenal at Highbury.

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NEWS IN BRIEF

UAE's federal advisory council reconvenes

ABU DHABI (R) — The United Arab Emirates (UAE) reconvened its consultative Federal National Council (FNC) on Tuesday, the official Emirates news agency reported. The 40-member FNC is made up of nominees by the UAE's seven emirates. It usually convenes towards the end of the year and its last full session was last summer, an official said. The FNC, which has equivalents in other Gulf Arab states, meets in public and examines draft laws before they are ratified by the UAE's president, Sheikh Zayed Ben Sultan Al Nahyan. It has no power of veto but when it is in session it can call on ministers to reconsider draft laws and make amendments. The FNC was set up in 1972, shortly after the formation of the UAE from what were previously British protectorates.

Tanker captain awaits UAE collision report

ABU DHABI (R) — The captain of an oil tanker ruptured in a collision with another ship in March is being kept in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) until investigators report on the accident, a British official said on Tuesday. Lau Chung-Hui, 45, has had his British passport taken away and is not allowed to leave the UAE, said Trevor Lewis, third secretary at the British embassy in Dubai. He is staying in a hotel in Dubai, waiting for the report to be made to the prosecutor in the UAE emirate of Fujairah. Captain Lau was master of the Seki, a Panama-registered supertanker which shed thousands of tonnes of oil into the sea off Fujairah after a collision with the smaller UAE-owned Baynunah in March. "We hope [the prosecutor] makes a positive decision and Captain Lau is released soon," Mr. Lewis told Reuters by telephone. Mr. Lewis said he did not know when the investigators might submit their report and added: "We hope it's soon." The government of Fujairah could claim damages if one of the parties is found responsible for the accident, which led to oil from the Seki washing ashore and blackening a stretch of Indian Ocean coastline. Both ships have been repaired since the accident and are sailing again, a shipping source said.

Thieves of Baghdad rob ambassador's house

BAGHDAD (R) — Thieves handcuffed an Asian ambassador and burglarised his Baghdad house days after he fled a previous raid and threatened to close his embassy unless the government provided protection, a newspaper said on Tuesday. Babel, the paper run by President Saddam Hussein's eldest son Uday, did not give the diplomat's name or nationality. "The house of an Asian ambassador came under armed assault but he managed to flee through the window and head for the Foreign Ministry asking for protection for his house," the paper reported. It said the diplomat threatened to close the embassy and leave for his home country if protection was not provided. But after some days, while he was still waiting for protection, armed thieves struck again, handcuffed and gagged him and burglarised his house, the paper said. It gave no further details.

Indonesia to send 180,000 pilgrims to S. Arabia

JAKARTA (R) — Indonesia, home to the world's largest Muslim population, plans to send 180,000 people to Saudi Arabia next year on the annual Haj pilgrimage, Transportation Minister Haryanto Daautirto said on Tuesday. Mr. Daautirto told reporters after meeting President Suharto the number who had registered for the trip was higher than this year's 163,000 pilgrims. "We need 24 charter airplanes to carry those people, we already have an agreement for 13 airplanes," he said. About 350 Indonesians died on the pilgrimage in 1994, mostly because of illness. Five others were killed during a stampede near Mecca.

Mufti to denounce terrorism on U.S. visit

CAIRO (AFP) — The mufti of Egypt, Sheikh Sayyed Tantawi, will give talks on Islam's rejection of terrorism during a 10-day visit to the United States beginning on Monday, the government daily Al Ahram reported. The mufti is known for his moderate views, in contrast with the imam of Al Azhar, the highest Sunni Muslim authority, Sheikh Gad Al Haq Ali Haq. The mufti, who has been invited by the Anglican Church, will attend a series of seminars under the theme "Islam and Peace" and will talk about "Islam's rejection of terrorism," the daily said. Around 540 people have died since militants began a campaign in March 1992 aimed at overthrowing the Egyptian government.

1 killed, another injured in Tehran bank raid

TEHRAN (AFP) — Two gunmen attacked a bank in the Iranian capital, fatally wounding the security guard and injuring a female employee, official sources said Tuesday. The attack occurred Monday on a branch of the Bank-e-Melli (national bank) in Seyed Jamehedin Assadabadi street in northern Tehran. The gunmen escaped after a shoot-out with the security guard, who was critically hurt and died later in hospital.

Wife batters husband for refusing to celebrate

CAIRO (AFP) — An Egyptian woman battered her husband almost to death after he said he would not take her out to celebrate the New Year, Al Ahram daily reported. The 27-year-old woman told police she could not control her fury when her husband said they did not have enough money to go out on New Year's Eve. She attacked him with a "big stick" as he lay in bed and beat him until neighbours broke down the door to save him, the paper said. The woman is being kept in custody until her husband decides whether to press charges against her, it added.

Somali group calls for Islamic government

MOGADISHU (AFP) — Somalia's largest Islamic organisation, the Al Itihad Al Islam (Unity of Islam), Tuesday appealed to the Somalis not to recognise any future government in the country if it was not based on the Islamic law. "We will support only an Islamic government based on the Koran," said Ahmad Bile Hassan, the information officer for the organisation. He, however, ruled out an Algerian-style armed struggle against any government by the Unity of Islam. "We will just withhold our cooperation," he added. Somalia has been without a government since the overthrow of dictator Mohammad Siad Barre in 1991 and efforts by the United Nations to bring different factions together to discuss the establishment of a government of national unity have failed. The Somalia National Alliance (SNA) faction led by Mohammad Farah Aideed said earlier this month may soon form a government in Mogadishu, after an on-going "national conference" convened by General Aideed last month. Gen. Aideed's rival, Ali Mahdi Mohammad, warned that the formation of government by the SNA leader would lead to the intensification of inter-clan warfare the strife-torn Horn of Africa country. Al Itihad has supported the establishment of Islamic courts which have been dispensing the sharia law, including ordering amputations for thieves and floggings for adultery in northern Mogadishu. An Islamic court recently ordered the stoning to death of man accused of raping a woman.

Bahraini opposition calls for dialogue

NICOSIA (Agencies) — Two banned Bahraini opposition groups on Tuesday called on the government to open dialogue with Shiite Muslim protest leaders to end conflict which has left an estimated 15 people dead in the Gulf state.

"The only way out of the crisis consists of opening a dialogue with the Islamic figures over their demands, and to free all people arrested during the riots," the Popular Front and the National Front said in a joint statement received here.

"Resorting to ambiguous methods will not help the problem, because it was ignoring the Bahraini people's political and economic demands that led to the crisis."

Another opposition group, the Islamic Front for the Liberation of Bahrain, said police arrested some 2,200 people during two weeks of violence between Shiite Muslims and security forces which erupted after the detention of Shiite cleric Sheikh Ali Salman on Dec. 5.

The sheikh had demanded the restoration of parliament suspended since 1975.

It was the worst violence in Bahrain since the former British protectorate became independent in 1971.

The clashes left 15 dead, eleven demonstrators and four policemen, according to the opposition, but authorities only reported the death of one person, a policeman.

Lorry-loads of riot police on Tuesday posted on the outskirts of the main Shiite Muslim areas in Bahrain to prevent further clashes, said witnesses contacted by telephone from Cyprus.

Bahraini authorities say Shiites make up 35 per cent of the population, but independent sources have put the figure at between 55 and 60 per cent.

Iran's ambassador to Bahrain, Jawad Turk Abadi, has left for Tehran to attend a gathering of Iranian envoys in the region, an Iranian embassy spokeswoman said.

The spokeswoman said Mr. Abadi left Manama on Saturday night and was due to return next Saturday.

Mr. Abadi's departure followed Bahrain's recall of its ambassador to Tehran, Sami Khalil Al Moayyed, for consultation. Mr. Moayyed returned to Bahrain last Thursday.

The move has triggered rumours of souring relations between Iran and Bahrain.

But the embassy spokeswoman said: "Abadi's departure has no link with anything whatsoever. He is coming back next Saturday."

Bahrain's prime minister, Sheikh Khalifa Ben Salman Al Khalifa, told Bahraini businessmen on Sunday that a group from abroad had tried to stir up street violence "to disrupt the peace, stability and brotherhood of Bahrain's single family."



Sultan Qaboos Ben Said of Oman exchanges presents with Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin in Muscat, during the first-ever visit by an Israeli chief of government to an Arab

Gulf states edge towards formal ties with Israel

DUBAI (AFP) — Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin made a surprise visit to Oman on Monday for talks with Sultan Qaboos; in the first ever trip by a head of government from the Jewish state.

Mr. Rabin secretly left Tel Aviv for Oman early Monday on board an air force plane with his military advisor General Danny Yisrael and cabinet chief Shimon Shves.

The three returned to Israel at dawn Tuesday.

Israel had no diplomatic ties with any of the six Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) members — Oman, Qatar, Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and the United Arab Emirates.

But Israeli television said the Jewish state could establish ties with Oman at the level of interest sections early next year.

The official Omani News Agency (ONA) said: "The Omani sovereign and the Israeli prime minister met to give a boost to the Middle East peace process and to support efforts to secure a comprehensive and fair peace in the region."

Their meeting came as part of "Oman's support for the peace process, for the Israeli-Palestinian accord and that concluded between Israel and Jordan" on Oct. 26, the agency added.

Oman and the rest of the GCC lifted the indirect economic boycott of firms dealing with Israel at the end of September.

This visit proves that the Sultanate of Oman, like the other Gulf monarchies, is well underway in the process of normalisation with Israel, an Arab diplomat said at the time.

Israel's Deputy Foreign Minister Yossi Beilin said the mufti's comments reflect the Saudi government's point of view, which does not dare, however, to speak it aloud in case it further stirs up the conflict between it and Islamic fundamentalists.

Kuwaiti Emir Sheikh Jaber Al Ahmad Al Sabah said in October that diplomatic ties with Israel were possible once peace was secured in the Middle East.

Israel's Deputy Foreign Minister Yossi Beilin said during a visit to Oman last month that diplomatic relations between Israel and several Arab countries could be established in "the very near future."

An Israeli foreign ministry official said at the time

that Mr. Beilin was to secure an accord with Oman to open interest sections in Muscat and Tel Aviv.

Muscat immediately denied the report.

Oman was the only Gulf Arab country to host an official Israeli delegation, during multilateral negotiations on water resources last April.

It also received a committee of around 100 experts, notably from Israel, in mid-October as part of the multilateral track of the peace process.

A senior Israeli official, who asked not to be named, said Oman was interested in cooperation with Israel in the fields of desalination, water recycling, telecommunications, tourism, and solar energy.

For its part Bahrain hosted an Israeli delegation headed by Environment Minister Yossi Sarid to multilateral talks on the environment on October 25.

Israel currently has official relations with five of the Arab League's 22 members. Foreign Minister Shimon Peres said recently he hoped to double that number in 1995.

Egypt became the first Arab country to establish ties with Israel in 1979. Jordan and Israel opened embassies in Tel Aviv and Amman this month following their October peace treaty.

Morocco announced last Sept. it would open liaison offices with the Jewish state. Tunisia and Israel next announced they were opening interest sections, a lower level of diplomatic ties, at the Belgian embassies in Tunis and Tel Aviv.

Rabbani ready for truce, not resignation

KABUL (AFP) — Afghan President Burhanuddin Rabbani has declared a unilateral ceasefire in war-torn Kabul, but has not announced his expected resignation from office, an official presidential spokesman said Tuesday.

"President Rabbani has reiterated that he is ready to step down, but he believes a unilateral transfer of power will not solve Afghanistan's problems," Mr. Rabbani's spokesman Abdul Aziz Morad said.

The statement came after senior pro-Rabbani officials had indicated that he would likely step down at the end of his two-year term of office late this month.

But observers here said the fact that Mr. Rabbani would not resign unless a legitimate interim body to assure a transfer of power had been agreed upon, was not a new development as this had always been his stated position.

But it still remains to be seen whether the president's main rival, Hezb-e-Islami faction leader Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, will agree to Mr. Rabbani remaining in office after the Dec. 29 deadline, they said.

"The state has called on the opposition to nominate a delegation for talks on a formula for the transfer of power and agreement on a new leader," declared Mr. Morad.

It is understood that a delegation sent by Mr. Rabbani will meet with a similar body from Mr. Hekmatyar's camp Tuesday in order to discuss these issues.

Mr. Morad expressed his disappointment with the United Nations, whose special representative Mahmoud Mousa has been trying unsuccessfully to resolve the Afghan leadership crisis.

"We have waited for the U.N. to come up with a formula for a solution to the Afghan problems, but they have not," Mr. Morad said.

Foreign analysts agree that without a permanent high-ranking presence in Kabul, the U.N. cannot exert leverage over the various warring Afghan factions who are now showing greater readiness to negotiate than at any time in the past.

Despite the fact that a small colony of foreign aid workers and journalists has permanently stayed in Kabul through the 30 months of in-fighting since the rebels captured the Afghan capital in April 1992, the U.N. has always cited the lack of security here as a reason for staying away.

The announcement of a "permanent ceasefire" by the pro-Rabbani side may lure the United Nations back to Kabul, where the war-weary citizens face the trials of a cold and hungry winter.

Foreign aid workers in Kabul hope that a mutual agreement on a ceasefire might also lead to an end of the military blockade by Mr. Rabbani's opposition forces.

COLUMN

China's MPs want minimum education funding level

HONG KONG (AFP) — Chinese lawmakers have called for a minimum state funding level for education to be set into law and for the establishment of private schools, in a bid to ease chronic cash shortages in the country's educational system, a report said Monday. Qu Geping, a member of the National People's Congress (NPC) parliament standing committee that discussed the draft education law, said the proportion of gross national product (GNP) devoted to education should be stipulated in the bill, the Xinhua News Agency said. "Current funds, or 2.6 per cent of the GNP, can never meet the demand of educating the Chinese people," he was quoted by the official agency as saying in a dispatch monitored here. Qu also proposed a special education tax and called for more schools to be set up by individuals and organisations in a bid to draw more money into the education system. The draft law would allow the establishment of private schools, but leaves the drawing up of specific regulations to China's cabinet, the State Council, the dispatch added. But some legislators warned that if the proposal to allow private schools were adopted by the NPC, schools would be carefully scrutinised to prevent profiteers from using the ruling to "make exorbitant profits," Xinhua said. "Most lawmakers have been worried about teachers whose salaries have been delayed or have even gone unpaid by some local governments, something which is becoming quite common across the country," Xinhua said.

Simpson enjoying special privileges in jail

LOS ANGELES (AFP) — Football star O.J. Simpson, who is on trial for murder, is enjoying special treatment in jail including daily showers and unlimited weekend visitors, the Los Angeles Times reported Monday. The report said most inmates such as Simpson who are in isolation also are given just one hour weekly in the crowded visitors' room, while Simpson is allowed unlimited no-contact visits with his girlfriend Paula Barbieri. Some public defenders are up in arms at the special treatment given the former football star and actor, the paper reported, as their often poor clients get anything but kid-gloves treatment from the judicial system.

Simpson also was allowed to welcome visitors on Christmas, while the 6,000 other prisoners at the Los Angeles County's Men's Central Jail had no such holiday privilege, the Times said.

Citing records and interviews, the newspaper also said Simpson was given unlimited use of the attorney visiting area on weekends, was allowed to sleep later than other prisoners and could use about 14 hours daily outside his cell for exercise, watching television or making telephone calls.

Tokyo to compensate for aircraft noise

TOKYO (AFP) — The Japanese government was ordered by a court to pay 180 million yen (\$1.8 million) to 213 residents living near an airbase in compensation for distress caused by noise from military aircraft. But the high court in Kanazawa, a provincial city northwest of Tokyo, rejected a plea from the residents to halt Japanese and U.S. military flights using the Komatsu Base near the Sea of Japan. Presiding Judge Arisuko Sasamoto said the operation of Japanese military craft comes under the jurisdiction of the state minister for defence, and cannot be contested in a civil suit.

She also refused to pass any judgement on a high political argument by the plaintiffs, who claim the very existence of Japan's self-defence forces is unconstitutional. Japan's post-World War II constitution renounces war and bans the use of force in settling an international conflict.

In Hebron, where a Jewish extremist massacred more than 30 Palestinians in February, settlers have announced the launch of two new construction projects financed by private donations.



by a consensus of opinion in Israel, and the state wants to bolster the Jewish presence around Jerusalem."

The town authorities want to expand it further by doubling the number of inhabitants in the next years and building 5,000 more homes.

Maale Adumim's main problem is that it is situated in the occupied West Bank and not in East Jerusalem, which Israel seized and "annexed" in 1967.

Israel and the Palestinians are currently negotiating the extension of Palestinian self-rule over the West Bank and a redeployment of Israeli troops away from urban areas ahead of Palestinian elections.

Limited autonomy was launched in Gaza and the Jericho enclave in May.

"Our efforts are aimed at linking Maale Adumim to Jerusalem so we will not come under the power of the Palestinian Authority," says Benny Kachri, told AFP.

In October the town moved closer to its goal by extending its area by six square kilometres, to 50 sq. Kilometres. It now stretches from Jerusalem to the Dead Sea.

Construction is also booming in most settlements within a 10-15 kilometre radius of Jerusalem, and in the eastern sector of the Holy City, ring the old Arab districts.

"Our settlement is backed

"The construction of 150 houses, which had been frozen, has just been authorised by the government. Demand is very high and prices have already risen by 10 per cent."

Optimism has also returned to Ariel, a settlement of 13,000 inhabitants deeper inside the West Bank.

"The government has authorised the construction of 140 homes and 100 were sold in four days. People do not believe that Ariel could be dismantled one day," said municipal spokeswoman Sandra Baraz.

Mr. Rabin has rejected Palestinian demands to evict settlers from the occupied territories during the five-year interim period of self-government, but his government has announced a freeze on new construction.

The issue of settlements and the future of Jerusalem will be discussed in negotiations on the final status of the Palestinian territories, due to start in May 1996.

In the heart of the West Bank, Jewish settlers are getting round the government freeze by building new homes with private finance and pushing back enclosure fences.

In Hebron, where a Jewish extremist massacred more than 30 Palestinians in February, settlers